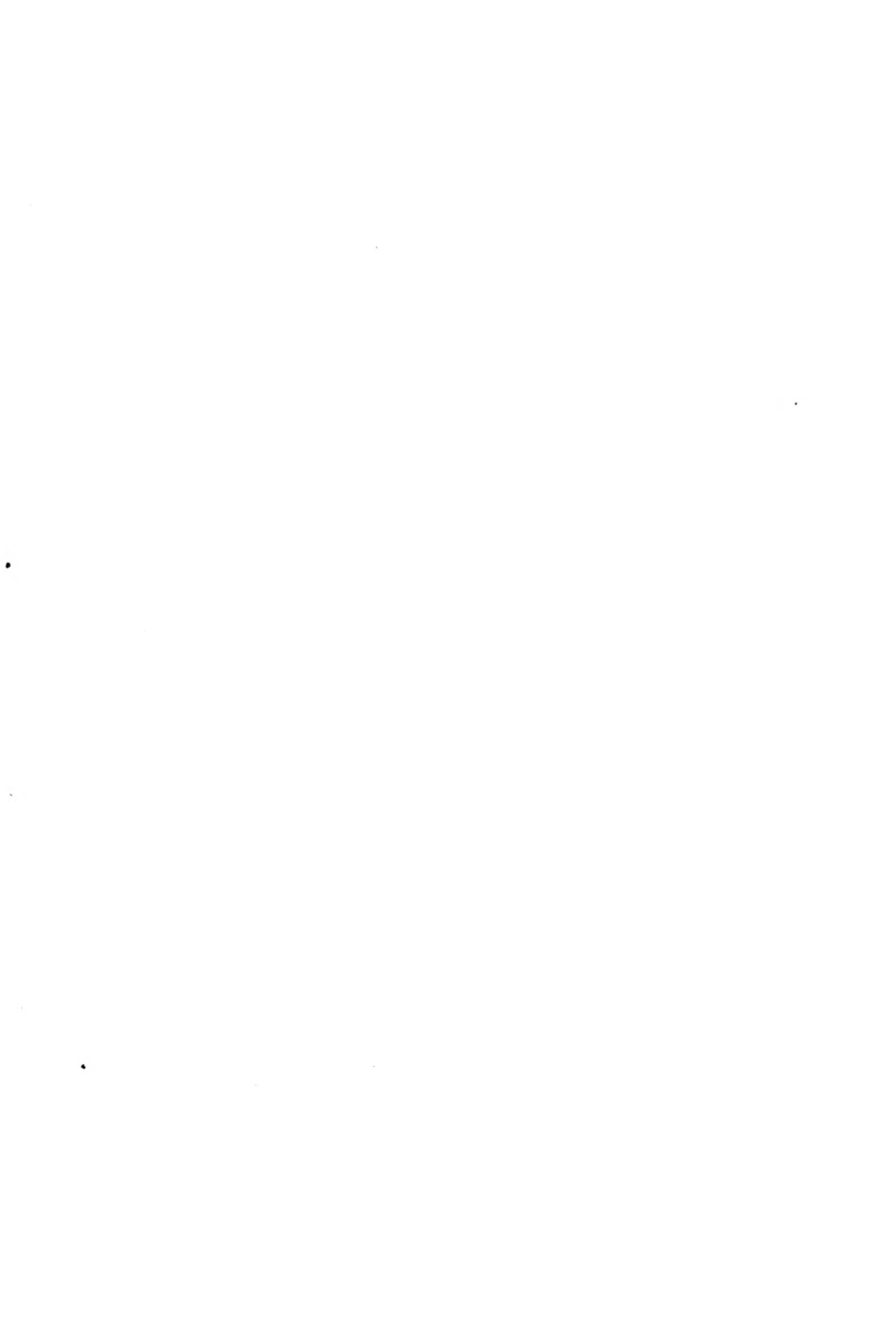


N/-



THE VILLAGE GREEN
AND OTHER POEMS

THE VILLAGE GREEN

AND OTHER POEMS

By

LOUIS GEORGE FISON,

Author of "IN PASTIME WROUGHT."

LONDON: ELLIOT STOCK
7 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

MCMXXII



CONTENTS

	PAGE
TWO INSCRIPTIONS	1
A HUMAN FACE	3
TO JENNY	5
AUGUST 1914	4
NURSE EDITH CAVELL	9
TWELVE MILLION YEARS OLD	9
TINO	10
A KHAKI RECONNOITRING	12
LACONIC LOG	12
TO INFALLIBLE FLEET STREET	13
RECRUITING SEPTEMBER 1914—NOVEMBER 1915	13
FRAGMENTS	15
POINTS OF VIEW	16
FEMININE FASHIONS	22
WHAT FISHES SAY OF THE SUBMARINE	22
PERCY	30
A LAY ON BIRDS	31
AN INCIDENT AT THE CINEMA	36
AN EPISODE OF 1915	39
A REPLY TO POPE BENEDICT XV	45
AN ECHO OF HOME	47
HAIL COLUMBIA	49
THE FIGHT IN THE BIGHT OF HELIGOLAND	50
THE VILLAGE GREEN	53
DUAL CONTROL	95

CONTENTS

	PAGE
AN INCIDENT ON THE THAMES EMBANKMENT	97
LEITH HILL	100
DREAMS	106
BUSINESS AS USUAL	108
WILLIAM (KAISER) TO HIS HENCHMEN IN RUSSIA, AUGUST 1918	112
OCTOBER 1918	113
NOVEMBER 1918	113
THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR	114
MIXED PICKLES	117
AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARY	126
THE VILLAGE POND	131
THE GREAT RAILWAY STRIKE 1919	139
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMISTICE	140
THE COOLER	142
THE COMMON EEL	152
TWO RED DEER OF KNOLE	155
THE COAL STRIKE	160
QUOTH A LEAF	160
SONNETS XXXV. XXXVI. XXXVII. XXXVIII. XXXIX.	162

TWO INSCRIPTIONS

TWO INSCRIPTIONS

Within the Minster of the regal West,
In that Valhalla where the honoured rest ;
Within that hallowed pile, those time-stained walls,
Where myriad mem'ries clothe the nave and stalls,
Where warriors vie with statesmen for a place,
Where centuries of saints have sought Heav'n's grace,
There in a corner 'neath the vaulted roof
Allotted for the bards' express behoof
And clustering among the varied throng
You'll find the following specimens of song,
And pundits might select worse for their text
Than these two tablets on a subject vexed ;
The one an eighteenth century poet sings
In this his apt epitome of things :—
 “ Life is a jest and all things show it,
 “ I thought so once but now I know it.”
As life was in the rough times of John Gay
So it is now in this enlightened day ;
We're still inclined to treat life as a jest,
To skim the cream and not the milk to test
Or like the fay to float from flower to flower,
Determined to disown the dismal hour.

TWO INSCRIPTIONS

To others be the suff'ring and repine,
But we'll make hay whene'er the sun may shine ;
To others be the self-denying deed—
The cross, the sacrifice, the Christian Creed—
But we'll be gay, to-morrow we may die :
So say we vot'ries of the butterfly.

A century later in a New-World clime
The other sublimates his views in rhyme.

Search for a niche on an adjacent wall,
An alien's bust, full worthy of them all,
Sweet as a singer, homely and refined,
Modest in marble—and this verse you'll find :—

“ Life is real, life is earnest,

“ And the grave is not its goal ;

“ Dust thou art, to dust returnest,

“ Was not spoken of the soul.”

Is life a jest ? Oh ! not to him I wot ;
He grasped the talisman, he grasped the plot.
His ‘ Life is real, life is earnest ’ chimes
Throughout the grateful world, throughout the times,
In pit and pulpit that august refrain
Re-echoes o'er the waters and the plain ;
These very stones, this sacred fabric prove
That ‘ life is earnest ’ and the jest remove.

A HUMAN FACE

And there are those about us whose ideal
As much as ever 'twas, is to be real ;
Whose lives are epics of as noble trust
As any were in this sepultured dust.
As rodents and as birds will rob their breasts
Of fluff to keep warm those within their nests
So there are souls unselfish, pure and good,
Who, far more than Creation's soul-less brood,
For God, for King, for country, or for home,
Will all endure, brave as the saints of Rome.
These are the influences that conspire
To make life earnest and to make it higher.

A HUMAN FACE

What is it in a human face
That just enables us to trace
Goodness up-welling from within
And beauty deeper than the skin ?

A Lily in its vestal robe
Can ne'er the depths of passion probe ;
A chaste Camelia carved in wax
Can never make our hearts relax.

TO JENNY

A Rose in its superb attire
To Heav'n can never bring us nigher ;
Its satin sheen and fragrant scent
Only confer a brief content.

But there is something in a face
That just enables us to trace
Goodness up-welling from within
And beauty deeper than the skin.

TO JENNY

(*née* JANE BULKLEY DE VERE HUNT)

Died 18 April, 1920

At what am I looking in this retreat
Where they have lain thee in thy winding sheet ?
Not at thy calm relinquishment of breath,
Not at th' inev'tability of death ;
But at a visage beauteous and benign
That through the woeful vista peered divine,
Refined and gentle in its fadeless form,
Devoted and devout, unselfish, warm.

TO JENNY

At what am I looking in this retreat
Where they have lain thee in thy winding sheet ?
Not at the chill environment of mounds,
Not at the corse encased within those bounds ;
But at a vision on my mind impressed
Of *thee*, as of a bird that loved its nest.

Wise in thy counsels, dutiful and good,
A meet embodiment of womanhood ;
Solace and helpmeet of the simple home
Whence seldom wished one otherwhere to roam :
Stay of the household, standard of my life,
And yet withal a very human wife.

Of what am I thinking over thy grave ?
Not of past pains, thou wert ever so brave ;
Not of past cares tho' like bees they did swarm,
Not of past clouds for we weathered each storm.
But I'm thinking of *thee*, smiling and sweet,
Standing beside me, with a trust complete :
When we vowed at the altar in one breath
We'd be true to each other—until death.

AUGUST 1914

AUGUST 1914

They'll guess not in an age to come
When Time has salved the present wound ;
When Time has crowned the martyrdom
And graves with laurel are festooned.—

They'll guess not what a chasm yawned
Before our disillusioned gaze
When War o'ertook us unforewarned
And on us burst those fateful days.—

Unleashed by Huns the hounds of war
With barks ferocious, scenting game,
Through Luxembourg and Belgium tore
To vanquish France and England tame —

They'll guess not as the age matures,
As years of Peace their tale pursue,
How Huns levanted from these shores
Soon as the signal summons flew.

How Huns withdrew perforce pell-mell
From what had been their Promised Land,
To take up arms, as it befel,
'Gainst those who late held out a hand.

AUGUST 1914

Full in the wake of these events,
 Whilst friends are foes and foes are friends,
Occurs one of those incidents
 Where wrath begins and friendship ends.

Good friends were Frank and Fritz ; so good
 That on the outbreak of the strife,
They vowed to keep their brotherhood
 As long as lasted limb and life.

The night before Fritz was to part,
 Chivalrous Frank asked him to dine ;
When for the last time heart to heart
 They chatted over sips of wine.

The next eve at the station they
 Met for the train which should take Fritz ;
Frank prays may dawn a happier day
 As Fritz in his compartment sits.

But, just before the engine starts,
 And unprovoked by word of War,
The Teuton, at that instant, darts
 A look of anger, and he swore —

AUGUST 1914

“ Curse you English for coming in ! ”
Says Teuton, and on Briton spits ;
He spat upon the Briton’s chin
And Frank leapt in and struck at Fritz.

There was a scuffle in the train
(Briton would have the Teuton out)
Wrestle and struggle, tug and strain ;
While “ Right away ! ” officials shout.

The guard’s voice sounded, “ Shut that door ! ”
Off goes the whistle, off the train ;
Off goes the Teuton from the floor,
Out of the carriage flung amain.

He might have cleared the space all right,
He might have landed fairly sound ;
But with vindictive hate and spite
He turned to kick—and lost his ground.

The train’s momentum had begun ;
The Teuton’s balance lost, his head
The platform struck, as out he swung ;
His neck was twisted. He was dead.

NURSE EDITH CAVELL

NURSE EDITH CAVELL

Place her on a pedestal
Where is worth extolled ;
Where in solemn festival
Deeds are aureoled.
Patriotic, chivalrous,
Nursing friend and foe,
From invaders infamous,
She helped friends to go.

In her Calling—dutiful,
Daily doing good ;
For the Truth—immutable,
She for England stood.
Noble-minded heroine,
Hailed before the squad ;
Foes, their crimes out-Heroding,
Hastened her to God.

November, 1915.

TWELVE MILLION YEARS OLD

On the mountainous ranges of Thibet
An oyster-like mollusc they saw
So they say that the age of the mountains
Is twelve millions of years or more.

TINO

TINO

Inconstant Tino ! Constantine !
Your loyalty needs proof ;
Your fine expressions we opine
May be what we call “ spoof.”
Why stand aloof in Serbia’s need—
Neutral in her Grand Stand—
Or lean you on a German reed
Or fear a German Band ?
Your parliament you’ve bowled clean out,
Your statesmen you bewitch ;
Your premier you’ve twice put to rout—
Is it to queer the pitch ?
Those captains from the Hun War-lord
That unto Athens came,
Say, are they “ Innocents abroad,”
Or falcons watching game ?

To think that Byron fought before
For Greece against the Turk,
And now you’re neutral in the war,
And shirk your share of work.
We proffered you the Cyprian isle,
Why was it you declined ?
Was it because you could not while
Your hands were tied behind ?

TINO

Inconstant Tino ! Constantine !
O tell us which is which ?
Do you intend to clear the line,
Or do you queer the pitch ?
One used to say " when Greek meets Greek
Then comes the tug-of-war " ;
Your war's intrigue, your tug's unique—
'Twixt Greece and Brer-in-law.

'Twixt you and Serbia it is true
There was a treaty sworn ;
But you have let the Bulgars through,
" The scrap of paper " torn.
Why do your forces bivouac
Where Serbia's Allies land ?
Is that a Hun-directed whack,
Delivered underhand ?
Cross counsels mar your tortuous path :
It's versus, now, or cum ;
Your Kingdom ? Or your Consort's hearth ?
Freedom ? Or Kaiserdom ?

November, 1915.

A KHAKI RECONNOITRING

A KHAKI RECONNOITRING

WORDS FOR SONG

No introduction need we two
Or ever we have interview ;
No seneschal need herald each,
Nor dragoman interpret speech.

Though we have ne'er exchanged a word,
No fit occasion has occurred ;
Yet when we meet if e'er we do
You will know me, I shall know you.

To glance at you would be too bold,
Yet fair I know you're to behold ;
Reciprocative, kind and true,
I'm sure that's how I should find you.

LACONIC LOG

Sighted U-boat on port bow,
Steered for her all we knew how ;
Two torpedoes struck her flank,
In ten seconds U-boat sank.

TO INFALLIBLE FLEET STREET

TO INFALLIBLE FLEET STREET

I've a word for the stroke of the Amateur's pen,
For the point of the pen of the man in the street ;
Forgive me for scorning the quill-driving men
Whose employment-in-chief is to write for the Fleet.

The professional Don quotes what others have done
In the field or the town by industrial deals ;
But commend me the man whose impressions are spun
For the weal of his world, mid the whirl of his wheels.

Cyclopædias devoured have the pressmen no doubt,
They are field-marshal critics to puff or to gibe ;
But the man who is doing his bit in the bout,
He can troll of his tribe just as well as the scribe.

RECRUITING

SEPTEMBER, 1914—NOVEMBER, 1915.

If only we could know before
That which the future hath in store,
We might if we were worth our salt
No longer hesitate nor halt.

RECRUITING

If only we could see the end,
Discerning duties and their trend,
We might abandon ease and gain,
Resolve to bear the stripes and pain
And, an invasion to resist,
Haste to the Colours to enlist.
But we've been taught to "wait and see,"
To drift, content to let things be ;
And our pet principles to save
Permit our neighbours to be brave,
And shake hands with ourselves and say :
All will come right, no doubt, some-day.
If only we could know before
That which the future hath in store,
That foes have staying powers and vim,
That they are numerous and slim ;
That they might threaten our preserve,
Might make us serfs and make us serve—
Then haply we would all enlist
To fight the arch inhumanist.
We'd train our men for feats of arms,
We'd heed the pessimists' alarms,
We'd clamour for the right to fight,
We'd hurl the pacifists from sight,
And learning that the future's there—
There at the Front where all men dare—
We'd from the Future tear the mask,
Disperse the mist and do the task.

FRAGMENTS

The signal S O S would flash,
To England's rescue all would dash.
We'd light a torch on every hill,
From Kinder Scout to Portland Bill,
From Arthur's Seat to Byron's Tomb,
From Shakespeare's Cliff to Devil's Coombe.
To Arms ! To Arms ! would tocsins roar,
Reveille sound—To War ! To War !
Bombs, Pom-poms, Long-toms, Whizz-bangs,
call—
To Arms ! To Arms ! Civilians all !

FRAGMENTS

Says a Magistrate : tea is not food,
Tea-hoarders are not to be sued.
That he's wrong, I've no doubt,
For Tea and eke Stout
Into liquids from solids are brewed.

* * * * *

Once a Counsel in white-washing theft
Claimed of will-power his client was 'reft,
Vowed that all in that Court
Were crim'nals in thought ;
But the ill by their wills had been cleft.

POINTS OF VIEW

POINTS OF VIEW

Everyone has his point of view,
The dry, the drear, the dreamy too ;
Professional and Amateur,
The full-grown and the immature.
And as you take your promenades,
Looks tell their tales like dumb charades ;
The boot-black seldom scans your phiz,
Your boots are what he wants to quiz ;
Nor does the tailor note your pose,
He's eyeing the cut of your clothes.
And baby's eyes are projectiled
On that approaching chubby child ;
Sure when young missy sees a boy
She leaves her mummy and her toy.
Just for the nonce, you are ' de trop,'
Grown-ups, in children's world, are slow.

Suppose you ask a man of means
To come and visit your demesnes ;
You trot him through the country fields
Past babbling brooks and wobbling wealds.
You feast his eyes on Nature's ways,
Near weeping willows, laughing jays ;

POINTS OF VIEW

Where ' Love lies bleeding ' lifts a head
And blushing Roses line the bed :
Where ' Creeping Jenny ' climbs the wall
And ' Feathered Cockscombs ' grace the hall.
But fragrant ' Stocks ' and brilliant ' Phlox '
To him sound like *live* stocks and flocks ;
To him there's little that appeals,
He's deep in ducats, deep in deals.
The sweet aroma of the flowers
Is no more to him than (Ye Powers !)
The odoriferous stable-yard,
And when he who's so cute and hard
Comes to the pigstye in his walk,
The *pig* grunts " What's the price of pork " ?

You wander round the Temple Church
With other friends its depths to search ;
The point of view you soon acquire,
The ear for music hears the choir,
While he who has a draughtsman's turn ;
The architectural lines will learn ;
The man of law in silk will sit
And criticise the preacher's wit.
Whilst you will wonder, could this site
Have seated once each Templar Knight ?

POINTS OF VIEW

With wife and son you sometimes go
To Piccadilly's picture show,
The callous crush, the colours' clash,
The Master's brush, the Mystic's splash ;
You'll scrutinise them all alike
Yet things there will be which will strike
Each differently in point of view.
For sure, you'll ne'er forget how you,
Before but in the selfsame year
That Armageddon raised its spear,
From picture unto picture strayed ;
Pleased and absorbed until you stayed,
Lost to all minor anecdotes,
Mute with the fate of Captain Oates,
" A very Gallant Gentleman "—
And worshipped Dollman's tragic plan.
Then turning round your wife to see,
She was ensconced on the settee,
You asked " What do you think of *that* ? "
And she replied " That lady's hat ?
" Oh it is quite the latest crown,
" It matches perfectly her gown."
In vain you search for your son's orbs,
Another picture him absorbs :
One framed in skirt and bodice trim
More interesting far to him

POINTS OF VIEW

Than Modernists, Impressionists,
Futurists, Cubists, Vorticists,
He wingless to his fancy flew,
And *that* was his pet point of view.

Have you met that self-centred wight
The voluble and ever-right
Who always wishes to impress
You with his puissance and address ?
His brain sits comfortably in state
In that proverbial swollen pate ;
He cannot, with express despatch,
Himself quite from himself detach.
You ask him for his sage advice,
You state your case and all points nice,
And he replies by telling you
A tale of what to him happed too.
And when he ends his rigmarole
(If you can wait for such a goal)
You'll find you still lack his advice ;
You're as you started, just as wise :
The whole connection he's forgot,
Vain is your quest, untied your knot.
Mayhap he thinks he's answered you,
Mayhap you fail to grasp his view.

POINTS OF VIEW

Typical of the hobby-horse,
Is he who makes it his resource ;
Whose views on life are governed by
An antiquated reason why.
No matter what the discourse be
On to his gee-gee's back jumps he ;
You'll get no point of view from him
Till he has run to earth his whim.

As for the Crank, he's past your prayers,
He hath no Country—nor its cares.
Of all and sundry, he's a judge,
'Gainst all, his verdict shows a grudge,
Hungry in outlook, crabbed and gruff,
Down on his kind, on betters rough.
Belongs to some Society
Noted for contrariety
To everything that hath a limb,
Saving themselves, specially him.
From him you'll get some views that are
Eccentric, warped and angular.

As a long-suffering auditor,
You've heard a local orator
Rise from the Chair to introduce
With words befitting but profuse

POINTS OF VIEW

A certain speaker, who appears,
And whom to hear you'd give your ears.
The Chairman owned 'twould be a crime
For him to trench upon your time ;
Unworthy he to fill the breach
'Twixt you and your friend's coming speech.
Nor will he venture to indulge
In what that speaker may divulge
But with your kind permission he
Will just a few words say to ye.
He then proceeds to gravitate
Towards the theme of the debate ;
Expounding this, expanding that,
Till the whole gamut he gives pat.
And that which most he meant to shun
Was just the point round which he spun.

And when at length the speaker rose
He said 'twas nearly time to close ;
But so well had the Chair expressed
What he himself would have addressed
There now was no need to repeat
What had been summarised complete :
Another time, with Chairman's leave,
His points of view they should receive.

FEMININE FASHIONS

FEMININE FASHIONS

Our mothers were wont to expose
Just the tiniest tip of their toes
 But the nymphs of to-day
 Make a gen'rous display
Of their neat and meticulous hose.

WHAT FISHES SAY OF THE SUBMARINE

“ A scale-less monster, fin-less mass
 That moves immersed and slow ;
A sea-ghoul, clad with cold cuirass,
 Dark as the rocks below.
“ That's what I saw and still survive,”
 Said Pilchard to Sardine ;
“ Is it alive ? How can it thrive
 Down in these shades marine ? ”

“ It passed a school of Mackerel by,
 I wonder if it's blind ?
It seemed to me to have no eye
 For morsels of that kind.
I scooted when I saw the brute,
 You'll grant we mites are frail ;
Mere tit-bits and ‘ refreshing fruit ’
 To big wigs like the Whale.”

WHAT FISHES SAY of the SUBMARINE

“ Quite so,” said Monsieur French Sardine,
“ That’s like the road-hog tribe ;
I too confess that I have seen
Lately what you describe :
A scale-less monster, fin-less mass
That moves immersed and slow ;
A sea-ghoul clad with cold cuirass
Dark as the rocks below.”

Spake Herring to the smaller fry :
“ In shoals you know we fare,
In shoals we forage round by Skye
And cruise to Roads of Yare.
The Gannet dives from heights sky-high,
Down in the water plumbs,
And we poor Herrings know full why
We lie low when it comes.”

“ But once as we were scouring round
The Pentland in a pack,
’Twas not the Gannet that we found
Was hovering o’er our track.
Submerged, a monster hove in sight
A strange amphibian knave ;
Was it a Brontosaurian knight
Or an Ophidian slave ?

WHAT FISHES SAY of the SUBMARINE

“ Burrowing and traversing low down
 Forging ahead he came,
The silent depths could only frown
 Or madly mount his frame.
He came a-tunnelling the deep
 Cleaving in twain the wave,
The placid flow could only weep
 Or impotently rave.”

“ Weird, rumbling, mumbling, tumbling sounds
 Below created he,
As if the brute who stalked our grounds
 Was unused to the sea ;
His gorged and elongated hulk
 Had a voracious maw
Where victims he interned in bulk
 And churned them o’er and o’er.”

“ His gesture was that of an elf
 Who traffics by intrigues
Who hath no neighbour but himself
 And who with av’rice leagues ;
He knew the route we did impede
 Yet ne’er he turned aside,
Callous and selfish without heed
 He on and on did ride.”

WHAT FISHES SAY of the SUBMARINE

“ He had the slim Sea Serpent smirk
His power innate he knew,
And he knew also how to shirk
Those courtesies that were due.
We liked not that Sea Serpent grin,
That wily, oily leer ;
They showed the devilment within
And gave us cause to fear.”

“ We saw him looming in our rear
With avalanche impetus
Inexorably he drew near
And plunged plump into us :
He plunged plump into us, I say,
And, so close we were packed
We almost stayed the despot's way
As through his course he hacked.”

“ But, oh ! imagine what a rout
As our kin winced with fear ;
There was no time to turn about,
Still less to disappear.
Tons of our shoal were vilely struck
By something spinning round—
His tail, I daresay, for, worse luck
It slew them at a bound.”

WHAT FISHES SAY of the SUBMARINE

“ You’ve seen mankind unkindly draw
Us in their wretched net ;
But, goodness me ! you never saw
The gore that tail upset.
We closed again our severed ranks
When that marauder passed ;
But numbers hemmed within our flanks
Will no more break their fast.”

Jack Sprat then said : “ Like Jack-in-box,
Oft up and down I pop ;
And once this ‘ fish ’ unorthodox
I saw climb up on top.
Its back asunder opened quick,
And wizards, I desried,
Discharged a missile that went slick
And sank an Ironside.”

“ Go to ! Go to ! ” quoth Mistress Cod,
“ You wot not what you note,
This thing ye think sae muckle odd
Is jist a mickle boat.”
“ A boat ? a boat ? ” the others cried ;
“ Why boats the surface skim ;
Was ever boat known that could ride
Beneath the water’s brim ? ”

WHAT FISHES SAY of the SUBMARINE

“ Well now it was a boat,” said Eel,
“ I’ll tell you how I know :
Mid weeds and slime I dwell a deal
In spawning times below.
And one day as I slipt around
I came across a heap
Which bulked so large I thought I’d found
A Whale or two asleep.”

“ My word ! skeered ? Yes ; but I explored,
Deduced ’twas not a Whale ;
Nor was it like a craft inured
To sail in calm or gale.
For I could find no gaping breach
By which it had been sunk ;
It seemed as if ’twere meant to reach
My caverns and my bunk.

And then I hear, as I bo-peep,
A rumbling sound inside ;
Sudden the body takes a leap
And gains the breezy tide.
Now, my opinion is—man hath
Materialised a whim ;
He’s launched a craft that makes its path
Both on and ’neath the brim.”

WHAT FISHES SAY of the SUBMARINE

Dame Haddock croaked : “ What times these be
I dinna what tae ken ;
They’re blowin’ up the sea an’ me
Wi’ these plagues faked by men.
They a’ at ain anither bang,
They sink each ither’s shell ;
An’ mair than aften we too gang
Doon wi’ ’em into Hell.”

The Gurnet to Red Mullet cried :
“ I vote we have some fun ;
Let’s go and watch on yon blue tide
How these tall things are done.”
Red Mullet, gamecock of the sea,
His merry answer made :
“ What Ho ! I’m with you in that spree,
This raider we will raid.”

The oily Pilchard he chimed in
With ostentatious zest :
“ Puissant and valiant Paladin,
Command me in this quest ! ”
The rest exclaimed with wild halloo :
“ If you go, so will we ;
We’ll take our mates, our mities too,
This super-show to see.”

WHAT FISHES SAY of the SUBMARINE

So Pilchard, Herring, Sprat, Sardine,
 Dame Haddock, Mistress Cod,
Gurnet and Mullet join the scene
 And Eel with them will plod ;
These with their tribes, a goodly swarm,
 Set out to view the sport ;
Each curious to behold the form
 Of what mankind had wrought.

Timidly they approach the crests
 Of billows lapped with light
For shyness fills their silvery breasts
 When sun-glare dims their sight.
They spot a speck upon the sea
 It's but a moving pole ;
They follow it and shortly see
 Their quarry and their goal.

Round it they make a saucy trip,
 Inquisitive imps they are ;
And when they spied a giant ship
 Approaching, they said : “ Ha !
W—hist ! Splash—Gadzooks ! Now what was that ?
 We're quite sure something sped.
The giant ship—how high she spat !
 What ?— Gone ?— The great ship's dead ! ”

PERCY

“ Alack ! ” quoth they, “ how is this done ?

Wish we like that could slap.”

They round their sombre ogre run

To see what next may hap.

What queer spectators ! What a swarm

Begirt that submarine !

But, by and by, another form

Of ship came on the scene.

The Pirate crew haste from their deck ;

A thunderbolt arrives—

Explodes—Flash ! Bang !—their boat’s a wreck,

And lost are fishes’ lives.

Cod, Pilchard, Herring, Haddock, Sprat,

Gurnet, Mullet, Sardine

All are, save Eel, blown up by that

Which sinks the Submarine.

PERCY

As the best of port wines is vetust

And possesses a layer of crust

So the best friend to me

Is Percy D. B.

For his friendship is old and robust.

A LAY ON BIRDS

A LAY ON BIRDS

You'd like to be an Eagle,
 Careering in the dark ;
Its Game you might not Swallow,
 But you might have a Lark.

You'd like to Snipe a Partridge,
 Let keeper grin or grouse ;
You'd like to loot a Pheasant
 Or Rook him for a Grouse.

You'd like to be King-Fisher,
 You'd like to be Great Auk ;
Or Drake, the Duck-pond Admiral,
 Or proud Cock-of-the-Walk.

You'd like to be a Diver
 To dig in ocean's mine ;
To tap the Spanish galleons
 Or Cormorant-like to dine.

A LAY ON BIRDS

You'd like to be a Songster,
Or Sky-lark when it climbs ;
Were only you a Warbler,
You might be in " The Times."

Though you are never Cross-Bill,
You Whip-poor-Will a bit ;
You've got the pip with Pipit,
You're fed up with Tom-Tit.

Don't emulate the Goose-step,
We much prefer the Stork's ;
P'rhaps you would rather Gander,
Than stalk aloft with Hawks.

Hear Chanticleer's Reveillé !
You'd like to cook-his-Goose ;
Bid him disturb his Hen-roost,
Not your suburban snooze.

Doves like St. Paul's Cathedral,
They ne'er go near Big Ben ;
One envies them their Dove-cote,
Built for them by a Wren.

A LAY ON BIRDS

The Seagulls visit London Bridge,
To seek their Bill of Fare ;
They're not the only Birds-of-Prey
That Gull the public there.

Swoops down th' Antartic Skua
A Penguin's egg to beg ;
Poor Penguin prompt retaliates
By " Robin " neighbour's egg.

Be you the Stormy Petrel
To lash the gnashing wave ;
To sniff the whiff of tempests
When Raven-ous breakers rave.

Far from the Owls of critics
Where Pee-Wits Crow around,
Go where the Albatross is
Where Kittiwakes abound.

Be where the blinding blizzard is
Where snow-flakes fret the face,
Where Mother-Carey-plucks-her-Chicks
And ' down ' comes down apace.

A LAY ON BIRDS

Where mists, like foul night's augurs,
Spread and the curtain falls ;
Where whirlwinds wail and whistle
Like myriad Sea-Fowls' calls.

Haunt ragged, rugged islets,
With cliffs of cloven mail,
Whose steep and jagged buttresses
The battering billows scale.

Where Puffins storm the ledges
And with harsh notes confer,
From O-r-r, when they are startled.
To A-r-r, when, pleased, they purr.

But calm succeeds the tumult,
The maelstrom's tide subsides ;
Life's fitful flutter flickers,
The haven of Heaven abides.

Dream of a New World landscape
And Birds of Paradise,
Unshocked at Lyre-birds lying
Or Pretty Poll's replies.

A LAY ON BIRDS

Or linger long on home-scenes
Where Thrushes trill on trees,
Sandpipers pipe on pebbles
And Finches lilt at ease.

The Blackbird trolls his message,
The White-throat shrilly tones ;
The Jay grows hoarse with laughter,
' Who're you ? ' the Cuckoo phones.

The Wagtail wets his whistle,
The Woodpecker slyly taps ;
Where broom and whin burn yellow
The Yellowhammer flaps.

Harm not the rara-avis
Nor migrant minstrel's clutch ;
Preserve the hovering Kestrel,
The Skylark never touch.

To mark the wild-bird's call-note,
To catch the song-bird's lay,
Their music to perpetuate
Is better than to slay.

AN INCIDENT AT THE CINEMA

The Nightingale regales me,
The Night-jars on my song ;
I'll seal it with a Cygnet
And sign it with a—' Swan.'

AN INCIDENT AT THE CINEMA

The Cinema Orchestra plays a Quartette
On the Thoughts of a Soldier on guard or vedette ;
While crescendo, yet slow, by degrees it becomes
Reminiscent of trumpets, of pipes and of drums.

Follow Anthem of Russia and grand Marseillaise
And the Anthems of Belgium and Britain it plays.
Then ensue Airs of Mars and fortissimo swells
With the trombones and big drum and cymbals and bells.

And the audience sat, spite of Zepp, spite of bomb,
To behold in a Full House the Push on the Somme,
The Push on the Somme with its harrowing sights
When the battle raged furious for days and for nights.

They scanned cohorts of troops on the march to the fray
From the Base to the Front on the eve of that day ;
They saw file after file of brave lads on the screen,
Could they recognise one in that quick-changing scene ?

AN INCIDENT AT THE CINEMA

They saw guns being loaded and guns being fired
To demolish redoubts and Hun trenches barb-wired ;
They beheld the French ' Coup ' and the British Grand
Slam

The movement ' en masse ' of the battering ram.

With what grimness they watched, with what pleasure
they saw

The spoils of the vanquished, the prisoners of war :
The captives looked dazed and avoided the film
But seemed ready enough to be quit of their Will'm.

But there followed a scene that arrested all stunt
When our wounded appeared hobbling back from the
Front.

Hobbling back from the Front, and it made your heart
writhe—

The halt and the maimed, to perceive them so blithe.

There was one who was wounded who limped you could
see,

But who bore on his back one more wounded than he :
In confronting the camera he swayed to and fro
But his burden he bore to the Red-Cross Dépôt.

AN INCIDENT AT THE CINEMA

And the audience claps and applauses resound
At humanity's deeds on that shell-stricken ground.
Though the boys with the bayonet bear all the brunt
They will hold out a hand for those ' down ' at the Front.

There were shirkers and workers, the spender, the spent,
Canadians and Anzacs and Belgians intent.
There were Tommies in khaki and Tars clad in blue
And a Poilu blue-coated, with cherry brogues too.

On the floor in the stalls were some hospital lads
With their splinters and bandages, crutches and pads ;
Relieved for a space from monotony drear
By the ladies who cheered them and shepherded here.

But abaft in the balcony, gazing was one,
Home on leave from the Front, from the gas and the gun;
And he turned to his pal, at the picture where he
Bore a man on his back, said : "That's me, Bill, that's me !"

AN EPISODE OF 1915

AN EPISODE OF 1915

They had come from the land of fair Lochs and big Bens,
From the land of deer Forests, of Craigs and of Glens,
From the land of the Gillie, the Crofter, the Herd,
Where the Pibroch resounds and the Slogan is heard.
The man shouldered his gun, but 'tis strange to record
His wife walked beside, and she carried his sword—
She carried his sword.

'Twas a couple that tarried in London awhile,
And they hurried along without word, without smile ;
They were wiry and lean and their stature was spare,
And they marched like twa Scots that could do and could dare ;
The man shouldered his gun, with his dirk hosen-stored,
Whilst his wife walked beside and she carried his sword—
She carried his sword.

The scent of the heather, the peat of the croft
Did such linger in nostril, or memory oft,
As they trudged through the streets of this forest of roofs
Unbewildered by wheels, or by shoon, or by hoofs ?
The man shouldered his gun, marched with sporran,unawed,
Whilst his wife stepped beside and she carried his sword—
She carried his sword.

AN EPISODE OF 1915

They were tough 'uns and rough 'uns and Spartans, to boot ;
They could trap, they could fish, they could spin, they could
shoot,

For the Scotch are a hardy race, valiant and staunch,
Keen as mustard in thrift, wheresoe'er they may launch.
The man shouldered his gun, with his King for reward,
And the woman beside him she carried his sword—
She carried his sword.

From Euston to Southwark they toddle and plod
There a nibble they tak, ' with a wack and a wad.'
The gentleman paused a wee drappie to stand,
But his lady said "Nay," with a sword in her hand !
The man shouldered his gun, and its barrel was bored
But his wife was beside and she carried a sword—
She carried a sword !

For a quay at a port on the south coast they hunt,
Where they join his corps that embarks for the Front ;
He was passed ; but his wife met with negative curt
For though clad like a man, lieu of kilt she had skirt.
The man shouldered his gun, but the sergeant looked floored,
For the woman beside him, she carried a sword !
She carried a sword !

AN EPISODE OF 1915

They arrived in the land of the Norman and Frank,
They were dour in resolve and each was a crank,
They would never be parted, was adamant she ;
If he ever rebelled, just her eye you should see.
The man shouldered his gun and escorted his ward
Twas his wife was beside, and she carried his sword—
She carried his sword.

They arrived in the trenches, the dug-outs, the pits,
And Jack Johnsons and Whizz-bangs were flying from Fritz ;
A curtain-fire raged, an attack was then due,
Our inseparable couple, they never withdrew.
He stood ready with gun, with fixed bayonet lowered,
And his wife was beside him, she carried his sword—
She carried his sword.

Soon the Subaltern sees her and bids her to go
But with voice soft as music, yet firmly and slow
She entreats him to let her remain in the brunt
For the sake of a bairn lately killed at the Front.
Her mon shoulders the gun, for his King and his Lord,
Let his wife stay beside him to carry his sword—
To carry his sword.

AN EPISODE OF 1915

“ Let me bide as a sandbag to shield him,” said she ;
From bullets to shield, make a sandbag of me.
Now my bairn is nae mair an’ my guidmon is here,
I prithee, I prithee, Oh, let me stay near ! ”
“ Her man shoulders the gun,” said the Subaltern Lord,
“ Let his wife stay beside him, to carry his sword—
To carry his sword ! ”

And his wife stayed beside him throughout the attack,
She would cover him, only he aye pulled her back ;
When the Germans advanced he accounted for two
Bayonnetted another and gave them their due.
“ The man shoulders his gun well,” the Subaltern roared,
“ Let his wife stay beside him, to carry his sword—
To carry his sword ! ”

A fierce counter offensive was planned for the morn
And the couple sprang over the parapet torn
They had barely the barrage in No-man’s-land crossed,
When a shell burst behind them and down they were tossed.
“ He has shouldered his gun well,” the Subaltern roared,
“ Let his wife stay beside him, to carry his sword—
To carry his sword ! ”

AN EPISODE OF 1915

He was struck in the thigh, she was struck in the arm,
But their courage forbade them to reckon it harm ;
So they struggle ahead where the boys of the corps
Over trench after trench of their German foes pour.
And the man raised his gun with its bayonet broad,
And the woman beside him, she flourished his sword—
She flourished his sword.

The man raised his gun and levelled it quick
To fire at a Maxim team peppering us thick,
Then he and his comrades pushed on at the charge
To bayonet any who might be at large.
The man charged with his gun and his bayonet gored
Whilst the woman beside him, she flourished his sword—
She flourished his sword.

They got home in that bastion, that miniature fort,
And they settled the business with Boches who fought ;
But a Hun in retreat, with revolver took aim
At our friend at his work in the bayonet game.
And our friend raised his gun, quick as lightning is scored,
But his wife that was next him she flew with her sword—
She flew with her sword.

AN EPISODE OF 1915

The revolver it flashed and the bullet it hied
But the wife ran her sword through the foe, and he died ;
To her guidmon she raced back and tended him quick
For the blood was in flood from his neck pretty thick ;
“ But the man’s done his bit,” said the Subaltern Lord,
“ Send them back to old Blighty, all thanks to her sword—
All thanks to her sword ! ”

He survives, convalesces in time, and returns
With his consort to Scotland, the braes and the burns ;
And the Meenister, Elders, the neebors, the Laird,
At a meeting declared that the twa should be chaired ;
The mon shouldered his gun, on a carpeted board,
And his wife stood beside, she unsheathed the auld sword—
She unsheathed the auld sword.

They were chaired, they were cheered with a song and a shout,
And their good health’s were toasted—with whisky, no doubt,
Yet our friend eyed his spouse ere he moistened his lip
For he minded the time when she vetoed a nip.
Now she gives to her guidmon the drappie outpoured
And what’s more, with a smile she restores him his sword.
She restores him his sword.

A REPLY TO POPE BENEDICT XV.

A REPLY TO POPE BENEDICT XV. ON THE PAPAL PEACE NOTE OF AUGUST 1917

Your plea for peace would move a heart of stone,
But you are like to cool one's ardour much
When you our adversaries' crimes condone
And ne'er with warmth upon their horrors touch.

Not less than you we more than pray for peace,
We fight for peace, work for its laggard signs ;
But here's no earnest for the war to cease,
Here's no abandonment of Hun designs.

There's no peace while armed Bureaucracies breathe,
There's no peace while their power is unsuppressed :
It still behoves to draw the Dragon's teeth,
Behoves St. George to pierce the Dragon's crest.

Peace, how we'd welcome her evangel wings,
How we would bury axes, bonfires burn,
And barter bombs and shells for better things
And how we'd clasp our sons on their return !

A REPLY TO POPE BENEDICT XV.

But barbarous foes unvanquished, we distrust,
They'd find occasion after to conspire ;
Their bond they'd use to blind our eyes with dust :
Back to their kennels, first, let hounds retire !

The racial problems round which you revolve
With abstract platitudes are undispersed ;
Let him in concrete form them first resolve
Who laid the mine for this upheave accurst !

Not till his legionaries own defeat,
Not till his tame democracy is freed ;
Not till his reparation is complete,
Not until then shall be a halt decreed.

Your Inter-State Police League will not cow
Nor make that autocrat Arch-Plotter quail ;
A League of Nations e'en confronts him now
And what, pray what, as yet, doth it avail ?

This cancerous growth in Europe must be staunched,
The aid of surgeon's knife we must invoke ;
And when the operation has been launched
The patient must pay for the peace he broke.

AN ECHO OF HOME

Till then, avast palaver and pow-wow !

Let airplanes full ten-thousandfold increase ;
Smite hostile armies, smite the despot's brow,
Smite hostile cities till they sue for peace !

Bellona must her chariot mount again

The war-horse must advance with tireless hoof ;
The field of Mars must still groan with the slain
And Vulcan's blows vibrate from roof to roof.

30 *August*, 1917

AN ECHO OF HOME

She's a Lady-in-Waiting, no doubt about that,
And she's waiting to answer a ring or rat-tat ;
She's expecting a maid
But we're rather afraid
She must wait whilst the maid thinks home-service is flat.

In the Army are Generals respected and feared,
But the army of " generals " has now disappeared ;
For the girls have gone mad
On the cash to be had
By making munitions in yards commandeered.

AN ECHO OF HOME

At the Registry Office was never a maid,
Tho' the Lady was fain and she ne'er underpaid ;
 Yet the cook quite forsook her
 As the Omnibus took her
To " conduct " both herself and the " fares " she conveyed.

Education will spread and wealth will diffuse,
Those who work with their hands by and by will refuse ;
 Our domestics wont trudge
 Up and downstairs, nor drudge :
They will simply write novels for mistresses' use.

When a visitor calls on some bijou " chez-lui "
He had better be ready for whom he may see ;
 Lieu of maid that before
 Used to open the door
The Lady may usher and hand him his tea.

A plague on this modern dilemma for spouse,
If we cannot get housemaids we cannot keep house
 Shall we try a hotel
 And more sociably dwell
Where the waiter will wait—not the Lady in blouse ?

“ *HAIL COLUMBIA !* ”

Better fash for the home worth an Englishman's wooing,
Better fash for the home that a soldier finds soothing ;
 Better furbish and moil,
 Bake, simmer and boil,
With all hands to the pump for the Lady who's doing !

“ *HAIL COLUMBIA !* ”

When Antwerp was captured and Lille was annexed
When the Poles were despoiled and the Muscovites vexed,
When Serbia was seized, Montenegro perplexed—
 Then Berlin was beflagged with bunting and glee ;
 Ho, Unter den Linden, Berlin's on the Spree !

When the savages ravaged and outraged with crimes,
When they battered Cathedrals, dismantled the chimes,
When they fled from the battle off Jutland betimes—
 Then the Boches beflagged with bunting and glee ;
 Ho, Unter den Linden, Berlin's on the Spree !

Roumania, Russia, Italia are stressed,
But tho' Austria may trust that their power is suppressed,
There are Powers in the West that Berlin and Trieste
 Have to reckon with yet ; and, then, we shall see
 If Unter den Linden shall go on the Spree.

THE FIGHT in the BIGHT of HELIGOLAND

There's a Fleet on the seas intercepts their supplies,
There's a Front on the West disillusions their eyes,
And the Stars and the Stripes will befriend our Allies—
Say, then, when you see the Piave set free,
And the Lys and the Oise, is Berlin on the Spree ?

As sure as the Germans this world-war begat
There's a Hell for the wicked—and Germans are that ;
When their burrows we probe, as a ferret stalks rat—
Say, then, when you see from the Meuse to the sea
The Huns in retreat, is Berlin on the Spree ?

Beyond the despond of an un-illumed night,
A Star sup'radvenient dawns on our sight,
As a message of succour is flashed to the fight,
And its portent foreshows, not Berlin on the Spree—
But a Despot's discomfiture. That 's what we'll see.

26 November, 1917

THE FIGHT IN THE BIGHT OF HELIGOLAND

A part of the Fleet that was Jellicoe's
Sank its foes in the Bight that is Heligo's,
But in trying to save
The Huns from the wave
The reception it met with was bellicose.

The Village Green

THE VILLAGE GREEN

THE VILLAGE GREEN

There are those who loathe as they loathe a toad
The hard asphalted or the tarred high road,
They fret at traffic's intermittent ache,
The dust that autos scatter in their wake ;
And their olfactory nerves are tensely tried
With oleaginous fumes emitted wide.
So they branch off from their " bête noir " ahead
And amble down a leafy lane instead ;
Adown a tortuous lane with hedgerows high,
Where beech, oak, silver-birch obscure the sky,
Caress each other as their elbows meet
And cast a canopy o'er this retreat.

Thus one pursues, alive to lyre and lute,
His way along this undistracted route,
'Neath veils umbrageous, light as gossamer,
That gently flip where chirpy cherubs stir.
Reached from the drive, there is that house and farm
Whose annals are inscribed in cloistered calm :
That house, which being draped in pale attire
So blends with neighbouring red-bricked barn and byre,
With the cool green of walnut tree and yew,
It gives the atmosphere a gridelin hue.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

But his route lies along the drowsy lane
Until its Ultima Thulé he attain,
Where, having with its curves him oft-times douched,
The lane into an open space debouched.
Peregrinating thus towards his perch
Came Leadale, Warden of the Parish Church :
Leadale whose livelihood was gained elsewhere,
But who resided in this tranquil lair ;
And as once more he entered Fallowdene
He thus panegyrised the Village Green.

That veritably English rural scene,
That spot of peace known as the Village Green
That grassy plain where juveniles disport
Where hopefuls gambol, Cricketers resort !
Those modest tenements, primitive and worn,
How snug they nestle round the people's lawn—
Trim cottages, sleek inn, verandah'd Lodge,
Warm inglesides of Villagedom and Hodge !
Each cottage revels in its floral patch,
Each owns its long-eaved roof of moss-green thatch
Whence curls the lazy smoke in wreaths aloft
Which zephyrs whiff and into vastness waft.
And there, embowered in the vicinage,
Behind the cedar-shaded Vicarage,
Peeps that paternal tower, buttressed and fast—
Grey sentinel o'er relics of the past—

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Guarding the ancient edifice of Prayer ;
Where every Sabbath young and old repair,
Where all their hopes and hardships are outpoured,
Where too, for joys and solace they applaud :
Where Life's chief episodes they celebrate—
The fontal vow, the nuptial knot, Heaven's Gate.

Thrills not the bosom when the eyes embrace
That immemorial playground of the race ;
That typical picture of a past'ral scene,
That Genesis of Home—The Village Green ?

Beneath the foliage of a willow tree
At the Green's farthest bound, a coterie
Of local gossips sat upon a bench
Broaching a matter dear to lad and wench.
In certain shires by custom every year
Each village had its Feast or Fair and here
'Twas no exception, saving that of late
Sprang up some opposition to the Fête.
So now this little clique discussed its fate,
Peasant-wise and in improvised debate.
To them drew Leadale nigh and listened while
They argued pro and con in country style.
Old Jimmy Lovelane (Wheelwright) he began,
And this is somewhat how his reasoning ran :—

THE VILLAGE GREEN

“ I’ve seen the Fair here fifty years or more,
My forbears saw it double that before ;
And why abolish this time-honoured Show
When all the year we’re dull enough, I trow ?
It brings young folk together and good cheer,
They e’en look forward to it half the year
And come from parts remote to visit us.”
Abe Brookmead (Baker) then descanted thus :—
“ For whose good but that of the vagabond
Who runs the show and spends the dross beyond ?
Children and elders might find better things
On which to spend than roundabouts and swings
And barley-sugar sticks and peppermint
For which you know I cater without stint.
Why should these Gipsy nomads come and take
The profits which we traders here should make ?
I vote we veto their incursion here
Nor let them foul our Green and atmosphere.”
Coombehurst (the Sadler) said “ I disagree
With Brookmead, ever he’s at enmity
With old associations and delights,
His public grounds are based on private spites.
Besides, how can we hold the Feast without
The music of the merry roundabout ?
And if no Feast, why then, no frumenty ;
And if no frumenty, what fare have we ? ”

THE VILLAGE GREEN

T'wards them at this propitious moment strolls
The Reverend Hillbury, Overseer of souls,
“ Ho, Junta, Hail ! ” was his accost astute ;
“ Good morning, Sir ! ” they answered with salute.
“ We now the matter of the Fair digest,”
Said Leadale, with explanatory zest.

“ Well, gentlemen,” said Hillbury, “ you know
My view is that it is an evil show
And that it leads to, not infrequently,
Immorality, inebriety.
I could give instances, let it suffice
The side-shows are unwholesome dens of vice.
You wot at Waterbourne the Fair's tabooed
For these same reasons and the public good ;
Let me urge you as well to veto it
As for the welfare of the young is fit.
As priest, I needs must view the moral side
Although I'm loth to mar your festal-tide ;
But these Egyptian tribes never make good,
Indigent and dishonest is their brood.
Therefore I would ask you to substitute
Pastimes of unimpeachable repute ;
Such as a gala where may athletes meet
And contests where both sexes may compete—
That's an alternative that I suggest
Where all may revel and the old ones rest.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

What saith the younger generation here,
Young Jimmy and young Brookmead to this cheer ? ”
Challenged, young Jimmy Lovelane with no side
But with stout independence thus replied :—
“ I like your last idea, Sir ! but I fear
’Twould be unfair to waive the Fair this year.
And though I’ve freely patronised the Shows
Nothing unseemly have I seen in those ;
Nor have I witnessed immorality
In any Fair, nor insobriety.
You state with certain cases you’re acquaint
But we might find in them a biassed plaint :
For me, I hope to make some bull’s-eye shots
At the range, if your vote the Fair allots.”
“ And I,” cried young Abe Brookmead, “ disagree
Entirely with this low festivity ;
For my part, I see no necessity
To hold up work for any levity ;
Toil’s to my father and to me our meat,
We seek no feast nor good-for-nothing treat ;
These ancient institutions are to me
Abominations and frivolity ;
I join not Parson’s sect nor moral side
But in this cause I’ll with him coincide.”
“ Now, Mr. Leadale,” said the Vicar next,
Can you compose these differences perplexed ? ”

THE VILLAGE GREEN

“ That cannot I,” replied the one addressed,
“ One time I would your counter-scheme have blest,
But when I hearken to the others, I
Unwilling am their wishes to deny.
If they prefer to have the Fair this year
As ’tis now due and preparations near,
I say it with reluctance and with grief
And with all due respect unto our chief
It may be better to renounce the ban
And leave till later his alternate plan.”
“ That is the casting vote and you have won ”
Said Hillbury turning to Lovelane and son ;
Also to Coombehurst and a dozen who
Had been spectators of this Durbah too.
While these harangues and scenes were taking place
From out of school at noon the children pace
And noting when their elders should surcease
They gathered round and sang this jocund piece :—

The Children's Chorus

The striking of noon is a joybell and boon
Then we flee to the Green and fly a balloon,
Then we trip to the sward in cheerfullest tune
To race with the hoop or the egg and the spoon.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Oh ! the striking of noon comes never too soon
Then we've done with the drills in squad or platoon ;
Then we've done with the globe, the lake or lagoon
And we romp from the desk to tease the buffoon.

Oh ! we play on the Green as soon as 't is noon
For the Queen of the May we plait a festoon ;
Dandelions we cull and buttercups prune
To weave necklets for Toddle-em's wooden dragoon.

Now Leadale to the Vicar said : " Behold !
Shall we two go and visit Frugalwold ?
Upon our way we'll purchase sausage-roll
And cake to tender to th' impoverished soul ;
Ah ! well, I ween since he hath lost his wife
He feels the disappointment of his life,
And now he's speeding down the slippery slope,
Crushed, crushed, crushed without literary hope.
He occupies a hovel reared of mire,
Slabs, flints, and joists help keep the walls entire ;
Thatched o'ergrown roof concaving there and here
'Tis wonder that it holds from year to year.
You've seen him doddering down the village street,
You've spoken to him kindly words and greet,
You've passed a leaflet from your hand to his,
You've welcomed in the Church his haggard phiz ;

THE VILLAGE GREEN

But many are the years that I can trace
(Ere you became incumbent of this place),
When he would often-time to me unfold
His tale of suffering in this mortal mould.
But you shall from his lips a portion hear
That may explain his ill-conditioned gear,
For here we've now arrived at his abode
Where the cold world hath left him to corrode.
'Ware when you enter lest the roof fall in
And whelm you with its reinforcements thin."
Leadale called, " Frugalwold, a visitor
I bring, you know our pulpit orator,
And we would with you some refreshment take
If you'll participate in a little cake."
" Now that is kind," said Frugalwold, " Allow
Me add whate'er my slender board hath now."
While he thus shuffles to a dark recess
To fetch the mite he fears he may'nt possess,
They slipt upon the cloth the residue
Of what they'd brought, saying " Thank you, thank you,
We think there is enough already spread
For all. Let us be seated and be fed."
With that he ate and ate as if he'd starved
While Hillbury and Leadale sat and carved.
In a short space the poor old man's reserve
Began to thaw as food revived his nerve ;

THE VILLAGE GREEN

And thus he spake : “ I was in commerce once
And had my tussle with the busy ones ;
But I was foolishly inclined to verse
And in its depths myself I would immerse.
I would not own to any then ; but now,
From my affairs it wormed me, I’ll allow,
It hath a most seductive element
And after studying, I must needs invent.
You’ve heard that ‘ Speech is silver, silence gold ’ ;
But after having lived my life I’m bold
To say the trumpet voice—in speech or song—
That rouses multitudes and sways the throng
Is the most precious metal man refines
And speakers delve in inexhaust’ble mines ;
While silence is the attribute of fools
Who bleat like lambs and are of speech the tools,
And prose is like the effervescent froth
Escaping unrestrained in copious wrath
Out of the champagne flagon’s lengthy neck,
Whilst verse is like the nectar held in check
And in the confines of the vessel rests
To flow in measured drops for treasured guests.
In memory’s chamber long the rhyme remains
Crisp and compact the verse runs through our veins.
In this, I was ambitious to be first,
To quaff the precious drops I was athirst.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

My work neglected was, I was resigned
To quit the race for wealth and lag behind.
I strove to write that which I thought might gain
Admittance into Prints which did contain
Effusions almost as inept as mine ;
But, futile hope, for mine they would decline :
Still I persisted, labouring to improve,
But ne'er reached that charmed circuit, that charmed groove.
I published works for Journals to review,
They passed them o'er in silence, chill as dew,
I wondered oft why mine should be rebuffed,
Why specimens of others should be puffed.
I've seen them quote another's, as a test,
Heaven only knows the metre it professed.
As for the vaunted Freedom of the Press
Would that we could its tyranny suppress !
Under the guise of public weal it thrives ;
But that's the weal which it exploits and drives.
It arrogantly spreads, on our behalf,
Views that are merely those of its own staff ;
Or else it prints some politician's squib
That raises Cain and makes the Public jib :
But he who walks not in the public gaze
His faults are marked, his merits shorn of praise.
Kismet ! I'm fated never once to hear
A stranger's rare enconium reach my ear."

THE VILLAGE GREEN

They rose and pleaded : “ Farewell Frugalwold
Another time we’ll further converse hold ;
You’ve taught us something of the ways of Art
Now to our domiciles let us depart.”
And as they passed along the village street
The Romanies with caravans complete
Were hoisting swings and hobbling pie-bald mares
Erecting booths and spreading Zingar wares.
But Leadale’s farewell with the Vicar was :—
“ When Frugalwold I first met and his cross
I longed in Helicon’s limpid stream to bathe ;
But, warned by *his* fate, I kept to my lathe.
Shall we meet on the Green to-night, all go ? ”
Hillbury replied, “ If you will have it so.”
The day draws in, the Sun, his blinds, draws down,
And puts on, like the Pastor, his black gown ;
What time that tired in body and in mind
The cottager draws down his single blind ;
But not to-night the cottage blinds are drawn
Nor will the minister’s black gown be worn.
There is a blaze of light in Fallowdene,
There is a fairy picture on the Green.
The natives all perambulated down
What euphemistically’s called ‘ the town ’ ;
And Lovelanes, Coombehursts, Brookmeads, Frugalwold,
Hillbury and Leadale jostled in the fold.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Quoth Frugalwold : “ I wish that I could paint
As would an artist all this colouring quaint ;
The twilight sky, stabbed by that motley glare
Of lights from yon amusements of the Fair.
Here are the dancers in the foreground wings
All revelling in their rhythmic caperings ;
Here in the centre is the grand parade
Where promenade the well-groomed swain and maid,
Bridegrooms and brides potential or elect,
Selecting with what they will be bedecked.
On either side abound the sweetmeat booths
Where gather children and the sweet-toothed youths.
Up there, cleaving athwart the avenue gay
Is where the steaming roundabout holds sway,
Gay with its countless mirrors flushed with lights,
Gay with its steeds bestridden by the wights
Who find occasion to attract the ear
Of partners as they round and round career,
And as the organ sounds it fills the plains
With its familiar and alternate strains,
Whilst in and out of alleys that thence run,
A stream of sight-seers are in quest of fun ;
Men halting to have shies at coker-nuts,
Women surveying their uxorious ‘ knuts,’
Others show preference for the rifle-range
Where her they busy keep who takes the change.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

They train their muskets at the tell-tale bell
That tinkles when they hit the bull's-eye well.
There in the background rears th' ascending swing :
Whose boat is filled with urchins clamouring.
Such is the scene an artist, I predict,
With colours on his canvas could depict."
And Leadale answered, " Yea, on it depend,
The scene could better painted be than penned."
Now Hillbury, in this gathering of the clans,
The Pastor of the local Chapel, scans
(The Reverend Riversmeet) who here had come
To overlook the fold of chapeldom.
And those two shepherds watched their flocks by night,
Nor was it unbecoming in our sight.
Thus interlinked mirth and religion meet
Divine and human elements compete ;
We could not sep'rate even if we would,
The worldly needs and the uplifting mood.
So when in life's diurnal task and part
Men of affairs assembled on their mart
Besought, on State occasions to adjourn
To holy fane, a saintlier task to learn,
They leave their bids and bargainings alone
And supplicate fraternally God's Throne.
And Hillbury said : " May spiritual peace
Betwixt us dwell ! May this o'erlapping cease !

THE VILLAGE GREEN

The Church of England's Orders should extend
To such Denominations as will blend ;
To Ministers who, wishful to unite,
Yield to the Bishop's Ordination rite :
A service they should mutually arrange
And livings, pulpits, mutually exchange.
So shall there less dissent be in the land
And Christian bodies should work hand in hand.”
The Pastor Riversmeet responded fain :—
“ Aye, that is Christian that which you maintain
But do you know I have a sprig of doubt
Whether the country seeks this turn-about.
One part prefers the prayer extempore,
The other that prepared by Liturgy ;
The rationale of your Book of Prayer
And its expressions are beyond compare—
Born of the wisdom of the saints of old,
Translated into words of beaten gold
It meets the soul's most wayward, varied move,
And never can we moderns it improve ;
But still its repetition week by week
Tends to become monotonous and weak :
Intoning tends to make it lose its power
And reading lessens its inherent dower.”
Hillbury answered : “ Maybe here and there
'Tis so, but some read as you'd preach a prayer.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Is it quite fair old forms to relegate
Because a Priest's become degenerate ?
It hath this virtue in that unperplexed
The suppliant can repeat the written text.
Shall we now 'bate this converse and repair
To mark the concourse and the giddy Fair ? ”
Said Riversmeet : “ As you will, I'm content ;
We lessons may derive from that event.”
The squire had come there from that house and farm
Whose annals are inscribed in cloistered calm—
That house, which being draped in pale attire,
So blends with neighbouring red-bricked barn and byre,
With the cool green of walnut tree and yew
It gives the atmosphere a gridelin hue.
He with his dame and family had come
To share the merriment of villagedom ;
To countenance with unpretentious glance
His sons and daughters joining in the dance.
And this is what the worthy clerics saw
When they rejoined the Terpsichorean floor.
Each of the squire's two sons was whirling round
A village matron o'er the grassy ground.
One with the ponderous Mistress Lovelane danced,
Guiding her through the mazy throng entranced,
Their faces were a harvest to behold,
Evading as they did falls in the fold.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

For tho' the rhythmic motion 's no great feat
'Twas marvellous how the lady kept her feet ;
Certes ! it was a sight for the adept
To see how Mother Lovelane lightly stept.
Clasped round the waist by the Squire's second son,
O'er the arena Mistress Coombehurst spun—
She seemed to trip with much facility
And for her years displayed agility.
But what step 'twas they danced no one could tell,
One only knew they flew round like a spell
Till someone trod upon the lady's toes,
Then Madam tripped and tumbled on her nose.
But still she rose up smiling like a queen
Arranged her locks and recommenced serene.
Now both the winsome daughters of the Squire
Enter the lists the general fun to fire.
“ Would Mister Lovelane deign to have a dance ? ”
Asked one with just a twinkle in her glance.
“ Of course I will my best foot forward put,”
He answered : “ But I have a heavy foot.”
What time he lifts that elephantine limb
She twice describes a circle full round him,
Where they marked time, there they themselves dug in
As 'twould have taken years to box the ring.
The good old Tory thought he made the pace
Raising his feet with such a gallant grace :

THE VILLAGE GREEN

But he was happy, happy in his whim
To see how well his partner got round him.
The other daughter of the Squire besought
Th' attentions of old Coombehurst in the sport.
Now Coombehurst did exaggerate when he said
That he could only dance upon his head,
For somehow he contrived to get along
And added to the gaiety of the throng.
The number on the hop now growing large
Oft into one another did they barge,
And every time of course there was much glee
And every time, of course, " My fault," said he.
Good sakes ! it was a feast to watch the rout
As Coombehurst and his partner jigged about.
Each dear old veteran loved this outdoor romp
More than the stateliest ball with all its pomp.
While these amusements were afoot, it chanced
Out of that crowd a youthful couple pranced,
They passed unnoticed from the jets of light
And passed into the ultra-darkened night—
Pleased to escape from all that din and glee,
And take a seat beneath the willow tree.
Young Jimmy Lovelane was the likely swain
Who thus led Violet Coombehurst in his train ;
Content to be together here they meet
And nestle like two birds upon that seat.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Tongue-shy, young Lovelane found, in time, his tongue
And in these words his tale of heart-ache sung :—

I so long to tell thee a secret
That I've harboured for many a day,
But no longer I dare to secrete it,
Lest I lose thee with never a say.

I fear I shall never complete it,
'Tis a terrible tale of my life ;
I tremble to know how thou'lt greet it,
'Tis to ask thee to be my wife.

May dear Violet be entreated
Right away for the years to come
To be my wife, I repeat it—
Ah ! now, I no longer am dumb—
Ah ! now, I no longer am dumb.

And Violet answered, singing like a bird
That to the call-note chirps its answering word :—

An it pleaseth my parents to sanction
Such a union as thou hast said ;
Then thy cottage shall be my mansion
And none save thee will I wed.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

With God for my stay and my stanchion
I will lend thee a hand with the spade,
Eschewing all lux'ries Gargantuan
I will dwell in thy light and thy shade.

From the fancies of bards who love scansion,
From the fashions of Town I'll be free.
But life with its nat'ral expansion—
Line by line I will scan it with thee—
Line by line I will scan it with thee.

And these Two Hearts, the dread ordeal o'er,
Opened, as opens wide a gust-swept door ;
Wide-opened to each other in a trice
And all their doubts dissolved like coats of ice.
It was a moment—a supreme event
To which both oft before their thoughts had bent.
How many times unrealizable
Had seemed this fateful hour, till it befell ?
How many times before had Violet
Dissimulated feelings with regret ?
But now the door was flung quite open-wide
And now the soncie lass had nought to hide ;
The swain had dug his spurs into his-self
And both would soon be jumping off the shelf.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

It fell out by design or else by chance
Abe Brookmead was besieged to have a dance,
It was a little girl with flaxen wig,
Who innocently asked old Abe to jig :
“ Please Mister Brookmead will you dance with me,
The waltz-step I can dance as you can see ? ”
“ I, I dance,” answered he, “ I’m not a fool
To caper like a jackass out of school ;
’Tis known I never gamble on the turf
Nor will I gambol on our green reserve.”
“ Then you, will you ? ” persists the little minx
And asked his son who stood there like a sphinx.
But quoth young Abe with glacier-like disdain :—
“ My motto is : I only toil for gain,
Dancing’s a toil beset with Tophet’s toils—
One plays for love, but one for money moils.”
The disappointed child turned from the churl
And speered his sister Rachel for a whirl ;
But Rachel Brookmead none the less untoward
Said “ Nay ! I’se no be linkan on the sward.”
The Pastor Riversmeet was hafflen fain
To see some members of his flock refrain.
The Vicar Hillbury with feelings mixed
Deplored the jar that left the child transfixed,
But only said : “ These water-tight ideas
A contrast form to those of cavaliers.”

THE VILLAGE GREEN

“ They are a family,” said Riversmeet,
Who to their daily acts apply their creed,
Whose menkind never smoke, nor drink, nor dance,
Nor bet, nor play at cards, nor break a lance—
A most respectable and worthy sect
Who ever upright walk and are correct.”
The maiden whom the Brookmeads had refused
Was soon made more than happy and amused.
One of the Squires’ sons took her round and round
And she her waltz was able to expound.

Foothot on these proceedings, came a screech—
An eldritch screech, alarming all and each,
A steven born of wanhope, dule and teen,
A cascade of horrisonous shouts of spleen
Which did phlegmatic persons e’en perturb
Whilst nervous wights could scarce their feelings curb,
And wonder was expressed on every face
As to the cause of this ill-omened phase.
Said Leadale : “ ’Tis Eliza Cloughbeck who
Disturbs the night-air with her wild halloo—
As doth the ill-timed night-jar mar the night
With melancholic churrings of her plight—
Whilom she chants some tune that’s done to death
Or raves of wrong and none knows what she saith.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

When young, she was the beauty of the town,
Though rather tasteless in her scheme of gown.
But in her heart's bestowal she did err
For she two brothers let walk out with her—
Such might click well in a Platonic sense,
But aught beyond brings rarely recompense.
So it transpired in this identic case
For both young men adored her lovely face :
Whether each swain knew of the other's suit
I trow not : certain 'tis the elder dude
Took an unfair advantage of a talk
Alone with her to win her in their walk.
Soon as the younger heard this was the case
Magnanimously he gave up the chase ;
And there it might have ended happily,
The elder might have wed triumphantly :
Alas ! the elder seemed to poise his gain,
He seemed to have a side-wind in his brain
That turned him from the purpose of his heart
And made him from the proper course depart.
He turned it o'er, minute, precise and cute,
And in the process spoilt the precious fruit.
In her distress, lament at his neglect
And many instances of his defect,
His treatment of her like a castaway
The poor girl in her grief was fain to pray

THE VILLAGE GREEN

The younger to remonstrate with his kin
To bid him take the fruit which he did win :
As one might plead with those who pluck a flower
And careless, cast it down the selfsame hour.
At that rencounter none knows what took place,
'Tis known the brothers did meet face to face.
Man of affairs, I'm quite "au fait" with scenes
Of wide divergency of views and means,
And I can conjure up in my conceit
The taunts, the vilifyings—words of heat
That likely took place at the interview
As those twain argued Lizzie Cloughbeck's due.
The plaint is couched in phrases to produce
A stunning blow to cook the other's goose,
A broadside's fired to rake him fore and aft,
A ven'mous shaft is aimed with woodman's craft.
A broadsword's drawn to cleave the known retort,
A claim is laid for the delinquent's tort.
The counterplaint's unfolded like a charm,
Cards follow one another from the arm ;
And still you know not what is up that sleeve
So quickly and adroitly are the chief
Points in th' indictment turned aside and scotched
Till Plaint and Counterplaint seem both hotch-potched.
Eyes fire with wrath as each one sways his foils
Fearing to fall within the other's toils.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Ensues discussion, endless, sans resource,
Until a mean is reached or a recourse to force.
In Lizzie's case, sage counsels did prevail
A compromise the end was of the rail,
The elder pledges to repair the breach,
The younger sails to Australasia's beach.
Yet did the elder not fulfil his pledge
But sat astride on both sides of the hedge.
The younger having gone to Austral's zone,
The elder suits himself, himself alone.
He to Eliza the cold shoulder gives,
Another wench he weds and thrives and lives.
Eliza Cloughbeck might have eased her pain
But these two brothers seemed to haunt her brain.
One having failed, the other might come back,
"Twixt these ideas, her head veered off the track,
And as you hear now, so at times oblique,
Heard in the night is her heart-rending shriek."

Now while this story Leadale did recite,
Poor Lizzie came and stood near by the site ;
Scarce had he finished than she whined again
Some broken snatches of a crude refrain.

Huntsman on his stalking-horse
Stalked his quarry down :
Waddle, widdle, whoop-la—
Left her there to frown.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Dance away my hussies
In the ladies' chain—
Widdle, waddle, whoop-la,
Quarry is in pain.

Huntsman, off your stalking-horse !
Quarry's help is nigh—
Waddle, widdle, whoop-la,
Clouds are rolling by.

Who was the wight who treated Lizzie so ?
Who was the wight who brought the girl so low ?
Such were the questions raised by young and old,
But Leadale answered : " Names I must withhold."

There was another entrance at the farther end
To which the central gangway did extend,
And something yonder seemed to have occurred
For men in knots were gathering, strangely stirred.
And as the riot of the roundabouts
Had just come to a pause, so shots and shouts
Likewise subsided momentarily
As haps at times in many a company.
It came to pass that imperceptibly
Those clusters spread to this sodality

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Which had been listening to Eliza's case.
Thereat a change occurred on every face,
A hush ensued without a shriek or steven
As if a thunderbolt had dropt from heaven,
As if a lightning flash had cast its die
Or bombshell had exploded in the sky ;
And shocks of consternation passed thro' all
As tidings spread that WAR was to befall.
Then Frugalwold was forward seen to press
And find his speech in this acute distress ;
Although lost in seclusion and reserve
He lifted up his voice with unwont verve,
He pleaded with the throng to buckle to,
To stand prepared their Country's work to do,
To leave their bickerings and their petty spite
And cleave together for their Country's rights,
Lest the aggressor reach their island shores,
Lest he bear down upon their very doors.
He said : " Let every young man volunteer
To fight for parents, wife and children dear.
All would be needed, all to risk their lives
To save their Motherland, sweethearts and wives."
He ceased, and forthwith young men volunteered
To join the army and to dree the weird ;
The yeomen and the yokels, squires' sons too,
Like stalwarts forward stepped their bit to do.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Young Jimmy Lovelane vowed that he would go
And do his duty 'gainst the foreign foe.
Whereat was heard a little stifled cry
And Violet Coombehurst heaved a heavy sigh ;
But quick recovering herself she said :—
“ Go, Jim ! since home and Country are bestead.”
Old Lovelane and old Coombehurst also swore
They would do all they could to help the war ;
And Leadale further said, of course he would
Hold himself ready for the common good.
But young Abe Brookmead ireful spake :—
“ Not I a share in this affair will take,
I'll neither fight for King nor Country, I
The need of fighting utterly deny.”
“ Go, get you gone, you coward ! ” said a voice,
“ A coward ? ” cried his father, “ whence that noise ?
Who calls my son a coward ? Know that I,
As well as he, the need to fight deny.”
“ I called your son a coward,” said the voice
Emerging from the crowd of corderoys.
“ Jabez ! ” ejaculated young Abe's sire,
“ Yes, Jabez,” answered he with eyes afire ;
At this, old Abe thus taken off his feet,
Became as dumb and could no more repeat.
While Jabez, still continuing, said in scorn :—
“ No ! You won't fight, you'll raise the price of corn.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

I tell you in Australia, whence I come,
When news of war 's received they'll beat the drum,
They'll say your foe is their foe, rise or fall,
They'll rise as one man to the Mother's call.
Where is Eliza Cloughbeck ? Where is Bess,
The victim of your callous thoughtlessness ?
Show me the girl I left so youthful here
That I at least may say a word to cheer ! ”
Whereat they pointed out to him that wreck
And he his arms placed gently round her neck ;
But, when he noted that their Bess was daft,
His eye fixed Abe like a malevolent shaft :
Almost his self-possession did depart,
Almost he nursed a fratricidal heart—
His words white-heated with excessive wroth
Were these : “ Why did you break your plighted troth ? ”
And Abe replied fearing his kin might strike :—
“ There was another girl that I did like.”
This answer showed the selfishness at core,
It fairly touched his brother on the raw
And Jabez flung at him his answer curt :—
“ There's aye another with whom one would flirt ;
To walk out with another's no light thing
When once an amoroso 's passed the ring.
That usage should have kept you from that snare—
—You've ruined her and robbed me of my fair.”

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Perceiving this encounter of hot wroth
Hillbury, Riversmeet, Gentry of the Cloth,
Here intervened and said : “ In view of war,
For God’s sake, peace ! shake hands ! be friends once more !
“ Ladies and Gentlemen ! ” now Hillbury adds,
“ This ghastly war, this ex’dus of our lads
Seem in your Vicar’s and your Pastor’s sight
To call for prayer in Parish Church to-night,
We twain will hold a service in the fane
And your attendance we invite amain.”

It came to pass that on this war-news night
With one accord all folk forsook delight
And dutiful to Church they did repair
To hear the Priest and Pastor offer prayer ;
Verily erstwhile never had there been
In that pile such a congregation seen.
Bedizened with their pearly buttons came
The gypsies each accomp’nied by his dame
Casting around them glances full of awe
At being where they’d never been before.
They followed Leadale who led up the aisle
And into seats bestowed them with a smile ;
Gamins who scarce their argot could refrain
He seated ’neath the pulpit of the fane.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Likewise into the front rows he escorts
The aged and the deaf ; and, so, assort ;
While all the lower pews of course became
Filled with those who by usage them could claim
Until as still fresh parties hither trail
He fills the spaces by the chancel rail.
Chairs requisitioned up the aisle were placed,
These by late-comers were in due time graced.
The grand old organ—well ! it was the best
The meagre funds allowed from their war-chest—
—Sounded the glorious “ O rest in the Lord ”
And Rachel Brookmead’s voice the words outpoured
In rich contralto as a solo part
And made a deep impression on each heart
Disposing them to shed the secular mood
And fit them for receiving soulful food.
By turns the Priest and Pastor then held sway,
By turns the twain inspiringly did pray
To God Almighty to forgive misdeeds
As well to succour in their present needs,
Nor leave them to their own selves comfortless,
But to come down and aid in their distress :
Then still to urge the multitude to Him
They bade the congregation chant this hymn :—

THE VILLAGE GREEN

WHILST WE ARE JOURNEYING ONWARDS

L. G. FISON



THE VILLAGE GREEN

WHILST WE ARE JOURNEYING ONWARDS

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—

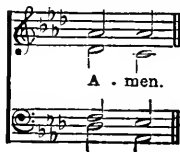
(St. John xiv. 27.)

1 Whilst we are journeying onwards
 Through each day's passing mood—
 The constant war with evil,
 The effort to do good—
 May God be ever present
 To rescue ere we err,
 Make us become more faithful
 And better than we were.

2 May He plant virtues in us,
 Our faults eradicate,
 So shall our hearts untroubled
 With new-born power pulsate ;
 And Christ ahead shall lead us
 And show the heav'n-ward way,
 Give, as we journey onwards,
 The order of the day.

3 But should we ever wander
 And hear no more His Word,
 No more the strains familiar
 Of melodies preferr'd.
 Oh, some day shall we surely
 A well-known sound recall
 Which, as we journey onwards,
 Will re-unite us all.

4 Then let us, as we sadly
 Look back on past alloy,
 Look forward to the future
 With chastened hope and joy.
 "Let not your heart be troubled,
 Nor let it be afraid,"
 Christ, as we journey onwards
 Still grants His promised aid.



THE VILLAGE GREEN

Thereafter in the pulpit Hillbury next
With much emotion gave the following text :—

Isaiah lxiv. 1—“ Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens,
that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains
might flow down at Thy presence.”

And gravely asked did we believe in God ?
All doubtless would give an assenting nod.
If, then, he queried, such should be the case,
Why were we so neglectful of His Grace ?
Dare we entreat our earthly kith and kin
With as much slackness as we seek Heaven's King ?
'Tis certain none dare treat a monarch so,
How could we then expect His grace to flow ?
However much to-day our food is due
We'll need it just as much to-morrow too ;
Therefore it need not cause us much dismay
To realise how daily we must pray ;
You say 'tis futile, no responses come ;
But seek we always what is savour-some ?
He said : “ I say not that telegraphy
Can switch a prayer unto Infinity,
But this I know tho' many a one hath scoffed,
There's many a prayer hath answered been and oft.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Let me one instance give you, list intent !
A lad in speech had an impediment,
'Twas an excuse with some for ridicule
With him 'twas an occasion for much dule.
In course of time th' infirmity became
Full insupportable and full of shame,
Till as a last resort he sought God's grace
And strove with inf'nite care to plead his case.
I tell you other succour he had none,
Yet by degrees the ailment left his tongue
And he who now speaks from this honoured place
Is he who can vouch for this heaven-cured case."
He rounded off his narrative with vim
And then he bade his hearers sing this hymn :—

THE VILLAGE GREEN

O COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE

Isaiah xl. 1-5

HYMN

L. G. FISON



O com-fort ye my peo-ple, My peo-ple, saith the Lord.

The first system of the hymn is written in 4/4 time. The treble staff begins with a G-clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is a simple, steady line. The bass staff begins with an F-clef and a key signature of one sharp. It provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff.



For dou-bly they have suf-fered, I dou-bly will re-ward:

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff shows some melodic movement, including a descending line. The bass staff continues with harmonic support. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff.



Go tell af-flict-ed Zi-on Ac-com-plished is her strife, . .

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff shows some melodic movement, including a descending line. The bass staff continues with harmonic support. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff.



To her speak words of com-fort, To all is prom-ised Life.

The fourth system concludes the hymn. The treble staff shows some melodic movement, including a descending line. The bass staff continues with harmonic support. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

O COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE

The voice of him that cri - eth, To them in wilds un - couth,

This system contains the first two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a simple, homophonic style with eighth and quarter notes.

Make for the Lord a high - way, All pla - ces rough make smooth.

This system contains the next two staves of music, continuing the melody and accompaniment from the first system.

Let val - leys be ex - alt - ed, Let moun - tains be down - trod ;

This system contains the third and fourth staves of music.

And all shall see the glo - ry, The glo - ry of our God. A - men.

This system contains the final two staves of music on the page, concluding with a double bar line.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Then Riversmeet the self-same text expands
And weaves another texture with its strands ;
How it the craving of the race expressed
Doubts would be solved were God made manifest.
But came God down here in our midst amain
It would be called a figment of the brain.
He said : “ The cumulative evidence
Of man is that there’s an Omnipotence,
An over-riding spiritual force
That governs man in his diurnal course,
That balances the inequalities
Of life and rectifies inequities.
Though He, to man’s entreaties, deaf appears,
He’s all the time preparing panaceas :
Invisibly but still perceptibly
For evil He provides a remedy.
This War which like an ulcer hath outbroke
Though innocent and guilty feel its stroke
Shall peradventure be the natural means
To rid the body-politic of teens
That might have otherwise infected all
And everlastingly kept us in thrall.
Wherefore, my friends, be wise ! Order your lives !
In serving nature ’ware her gins and gyves !
Is she your mistress ? you’re her slaves confessed,
But master her and she will serve you best ;
Then from your nature, turn to nature’s fount
And you shall see God come down from His mount.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

To God, to nature, be but just ! You'll own
There is a God, unseen, but not unknown ;
And you will find that prayer daily renewed
Is as essential as is daily food.”
He ceased and bade them for their souls' repast
To sing : “ O God our help in ages past.”
The Benison and National Anthem closed
The scene ; the people left, helped and composed.
And as they from the sanctuary passed
Side-glances at the lancet panes they cast
For, as the light inside came glinting through
It shed a reflex of a ruddy hue ;
And the stained windows thus, at night withal,
Effulged like rubies on the darksome wall.

In pairs and parties now all homeward go
And gossipings of course begin to flow.
'Tis said that one old fellow reckoned that
We very soon would beat the Germans flat
For Fallowdene and Waterbourne, ahem !
Could muster men enough to master them.
'Tis strange, but it is needful to repeat
Some cannot look beyond the village street ;
The limit of their vision is that found
Between the village pump and village pound.
While others thought that Frugalwold was daft
Like every other member of his craft ;
As for his poverty, that was no vice,
Bards ever were as poor as were church-mice.

THE VILLAGE GREEN

And as for his exclusion by the Press
No doubt he'd done sufficient to transgress :
For seeking once a rhyme for " creditors "
The coon used " horse " instead of—" editors " !
Of course it was the cruelest of crimes,
Why should they further dip into his rhymes ?
When heav'n they reach and life no longer irks
They haply may find time to read his works.
Another party talked of Rachel's voice
And wondered, wondered who would be her choice.
They thought they'd seen her with the younger Jim,
She might do worse than set her cap at him.
And as for Violet, of course young Abe
Would kiss the ground she trod on, like a babe.
Just then sweet Violet and young Jim passed
Arm in arm, and the gossips stood aghast.
This was the converse that was overheard,
This was the pair of lovers' parting word :—
" Aye, Violet ! I will be true as steel,
Where'er I go, to thee I will be leal ;
Nothing on earth shall lure me from my zeal,
Thou art my prize and I will guard thy weal."
" Dear Jimmy ! I can trust thy steadfast heart,
I will be brave though it be hard to part ;
Be sure that I will put up many a prayer
For thee, for thee, and nought shall fail thee there.
Go, since it is thy duty, to the fight !
God will preserve thee, for the cause is right."

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Upon the seat beside the willow tree
Sat Leadale, Lovelane and their company—
The Coombehurst parents, and the Brookmead fold,
But Jabez stood with Bess and Frugalwold.
Then mother Brookmead took Eliza's hand
And bade her husband with his brother stand,
Urged them to lead Eliza to her home
And see the poor thing safe beneath her dome.
For, clearly Lizzie had not long to live
And it would soothe her if she could forgive.
In her view, both the brothers had done wrong—
Abe, yea ; and Jabez stayed away too long.
Then Leadale beckoned unto Frugalwold
And like a shepherd brought him to his fold,
Paced with him to his solitary cot
And still, as ever, comforted his lot.

The douce, the dour, the blest and the distressed,
The votaries of the Fair—retired to rest.
Into their caravans the gypsies crept
And into peace the village lapsed and slept.
Life's lights and shades that erst had thrilled the scene
Waned like the moving pictures on a screen.
The day's pulsations and the pastoral theme
Were metamorphosed into a night's dream ;
And the wee cosmos of sweet Fallowdene
Sank into torpor round the Village Green.

DUAL CONTROL

DUAL CONTROL

We are tenants for life of our skin,
We are Lords of the Manor within ;
 And the landlord is still
 The one with the will,
But his paunch is the tenant and twin.

Since the lease of this hide was begun,
The landlord and tenant were one ;
 But the cost of repairs
 Undermined their affairs,
For his Lordship thinks tenant needs none.

But as time on his axis moves round
Wear-and-tears are sure to be found ;
 Then will landlord wax plaintive
 Because tenant 's a plaintiff
In a suit where the fine is a pound.

In this dual control, we depone,
There's a mind over matter and bone ;
 So the duel begins
 'Twixt these singular twins,
For my lord has a will of his own.

DUAL CONTROL

It's a paradox pretty but plain—
In the lease of this shell there are twain ;
 The tenant, in brief,
 Holds the landlord in fief,
Yet the two are but one in their reign.

Now, if folk you encounter should croak
That nature's a bore and a yoke,
 Say : The tenant within
 To his overlord twin
Peradventure may call a revoke !

Constitutions belike you may train,
But their limits you also may drain ;
 Burn both ends of the wick
 And the light will fail quick :
Thus your tenant on YOU may distraint !

There was once a sophistical wight
Kept his own commissariat slight ;
 So the tenant, restricted,
 Had his landlord evicted,
And all for the lack of a bite.

An INCIDENT on THAMES EMBANKMENT

It is not when we're supple and strong—
In the days of the salad and song—
 That we feel the effects
 Of early neglects
But, my dear, they are coming along !

At a pic-nic, siesta or game,
You may warn the bare shoulders and frame
 That rheumatics and cramp
 Will result from the damp ;
But, my dear, they get *there* all the same !

Oh ! The Lord of the Manor 's a fool,
He 's as wilful, my dear, as a mule ;
 Till the tenant rebels,
 And, lastly, compels
Mr. Landlord to yield up his rule.

AN INCIDENT ON THE THAMES EMBANKMENT

For a space had the hub of the universe paused,
The hack had been stabled, the carriage unhorsed ;
The Metropolis lapsed into silence and sleep,
Its pulse ceased to throb and its heart ceased to leap.

An INCIDENT on THAMES EMBANKMENT

Like a giant fatigued, who divests for a rest,
Each street was denuded, each shop was undressed ;
Every bird with fair plumage had flown to its roost
And all weary-with-work had their buskins unloosed.

Like an Emperor's pallium, a dimness profound
Enveloped the city, obscured all around,
Save that far in the zenith, in measureless height
Like an Emperor's orders, the stars hove in sight.

In this somnolent atmosphere, presently strolls
To Victoria Embankment, a player of rôles,
A comedian commanding encores and recalls
He had stepped from the footlights of theatres and halls.

He had strayed from the footlights of theatres and halls
Where the curtain of fame ever rises and falls :
He had come to this haven of refuge to breathe
That wide air which the banks of the river bequeath.

'Tis a place of retirement, a scene of delight
When seen on a starlit and Turneresque night ;
Then the drab and unbeautiful buildings of Town
Are encompassed and softened with eider-like down.

'Neath the parapet placidly patters the stream
Sympathetic like humans enjoying its dream ;
And the whole vast expanse of tide-water and stone
Seems a vision intangible, eerie and lone.

An INCIDENT on THAMES EMBANKMENT

In the stillness of night when no footfalls disturb,
The comedian this spectacle views from the kerb ;
And, when he had drunk a deep draught of the air
He is suddenly conscious another is there.

One, who, on the flagstones reclined, like a sack,
'Gainst the parapet huddling and resting his back,
And who tried, as he heard the comedian approach,
To articulate words and his subject to broach.

The comedian was rich, better still he was kind,
He encouraged the form to unburden his mind ;
And he gained the intelligence vouched for by fact
That the man was an actor, employment he lacked.

So he gave him the wherewithal lodging to find
And was turning away, when before and behind
Like spooks from the shadows, a multitude sprang
And entreated his aid, though they spoke it in slang.

Hard by, was a brewer of coffee with stall,
The artiste paid a pound for a cup-full for all.
“ Good luck to you, Sir ! ” was the outcast’s good-night,
“ May you never lack cheers, this good cheer to requite ! ”

Do you know there were others undomiciled there,
Unaccustomed the stones for a pillow to share ?
Yet they bore without murmur their undeserved woes
And laid themselves down in that draughty repose.

LEITH HILL

They lay themselves down, all as silent as tombs ;
The riverscape picture its liveness resumes :
From her plinth the Sphinx watches the vanishing crowds,
And the haven of refuge, its destitutes, shrouds.

N.B.—Since the incident portrayed above occurred, many things have happened : horse-drawn vehicles have largely been superseded by motors ; the Salvation Army brought succour to the helpless individuals who nightly congregated on the Embankment ; more doss-houses have been provided to shelter these people ; the Police no longer allow them to sleep on that terrace ; and Tramways have been suffered to run over and to disfigure the once noble Embankment.

LEITH HILL

By a bridle-path leading from Holmbury Vill
You may skirt round the waist of romantic Leith Hill,
As you tramp thro' her woods where the beeches are fair
You may champ the aroma of nuts in the air.

Looking over her shoulders where pinewoods abound
You climb to her neck where the heather is found ;
You impinge on her brow with its coiffure of green
And survey from her crest the enravishing scene.

LEITH HILL

Stands a tower on the top of this lofty Leith Hill
And the shires that surround it lie spread 'neath its cill,
From its roof you a chart of South England may see
From the heights north of London to Shoreham-on-Sea.

Oh ! Bright beams the sun on her majesty's throne,
And keen blows the wind on that eminent cone ;
The ling is so purple, the sward is so green
They smile like the gems in the crown of a queen.

To the cliffs be the billows, the breezy ozone !
To the bard be the brook and its babbling intone ;
Be the lochs to the Scot, be to Lakeland the fells,
But to Downlands be husbandry, verdure and dells !

Be the lullaby hushed in this solitude fond !
Let the infant be soothed with Oberon's wand !
Let the mother be fair, and the father be fain
And may never an asp this aspect profane !

Thro' the Town flow the tide and the current of life
And are visualised there the world and his wife ;
But here in the gloaming or nightlight opaque
Is envisaged a spirit abroad and awake.

Have you witnessed an infantile imp of an elf
In a looking-glass dubiously peer at itself ?
Seen it waddle behind and the mercury scrape
To discover the cause of the impudent shape ?

LEITH HILL

In the Town is the front of the mirror, you'll find,
It is there is reflected humanity's mind ;
But here the reverse of the pier-glass you scan,
You're aware that a Spirit rules nature and man.

Peradventure, one day, to the rear you will pass
And the quick-silver prove of eternity's glass ;
You'll look over the brow of The Better Land,
Hear The Master's Voice, face The Unseen Hand.

But now it is noon on this monarch of mounds
And the seer is taboo, for the prospect dumbfounds ;
Let's recline on this vestment of velvety turf
And discern in the distance the indistinct surf.

But the South Downs protrude like a bunker between
And you seldom decipher the billowy sheen ;
They've a hump like a camel called Chanctonberg Ring,
'Tis that cluster of trees on the camp of a king.

Then eastward a scarpment at Lancing you'll see
And perceive there at times a glimpse of the sea ;
There the Adur meanders with hesitant stride
To meet the adventurous, boisterous tide.

Still away to the east you can trace Beachy Head
By a break in the chain towards Pevensy bed ;
And easterly yet, in its towering retreat,
Is the height before Fairlight, above Lover's Seat.

LEITH HILL

But enough of the runaway rivulet bride
Who meets the adventurous, boisterous tide !
And enough of the cliff where the sirens repeat
The tale of the mourner who leapt from her seat !

Let us summon the phantoms of legend and lore,
View a scene here enacted in days of yore ;
When all was a forest that now is a plain
And when Ethelwulf vanquished the hosts of the Dane !

Let us picture the passing of horses and men,
Hear the sound of their footfalls, now and then !
Hear the stroke of the axe as the timber it strikes
To widen the route for the archers and pikes !

They are freebooters, berserkers, Danes that you scan,
They are bearded and stalwart with weather-beat tan ;
They are robbers afloat and robbers ashore,
Hard-visaged like Vikings, inured to the war.

It was here that they traversed the bowery aisle
When the Roman-road led thro' the forest defile ;
In the depths of the thickets 'twas bodeful to go
For the fear of a wolf or a boar or a foe.

Not in scarlet or blue, not in khaki or grey
Were they garbed, like campaigners we wot of to-day ;
But the beast of the field and the brute of the chase
Gave their coats for the guise of this buccaneer race.

LEITH HILL

Let us picture the passage of baggage and loot,
The battle-axe shouldered, its blade peracute ;
The halberd and spear, the club and the shield,
And the two-handed sword for the Jarl to wield.

An outpost returns—further progress they stop,
And rapidly bivouac under this cop ;
North of Ockley, a scout had met Ethelwulf's van,
So, holding the road, to the knoll they ran.

Like ants they swarm up the slopes of the coll,
They seize Anstie Camp and they picket this poll ;
While a note of misgiving arrives from afar
Like the croak of a crake when it hears a foot jar.

The note of the horn it is dying away
As, the night ere the battle, all rest where they may ;
The warriors make sure that their arms are beside
And in vigil the sentinels o'er them preside.

Like the crow of a cock at the end of the night
An alarum began the din of the fight ;
But the clangours became by and by more bizarre
Till at mid-day they grew to a dense tintamar.

Now Ethelwulf, king, and Ethelbald, son,
For the high-ground had made, as Denmark had done ;
O'er an emerald lea they attained Felday Vill
And rested astride of Holmbury Hill.

LEITH HILL

The father and son saw their lines were well manned,
The array of the battle they overnight planned :
By the sire would the Stane Street at Ockley be barred
While the son would advance o'er the ridge with his guard.

And Ethelbald moved at the break of the day,
Reached the scalp of Leith Hill where the berserkers lay ;
By a vigorous stroke made the Danes reinforce,
Till his sire drove a wedge thro' their ranks with his horse.

Thro' the breach thus created, by way of the road,
Poured the English reserves who to right and left strode,
Till the Danes were encircled in rear and in front
And their rout was completed—their run, a king's hunt.

Now, gone are the Danes and the blade peracute,
The Danelagh, the Danegeld and Sweyn and Canute ;
But to-day we may quaff to the health of the scald
And in drink-hael and wass-hael he may be recalled.

And the forest is gone ; but these summits remain—
Gone the fauna and flora ; but seed springs again,
As the butterfly leaps from his chrysalis state
And, with pinions, assumes his rejuvenate fate.

DREAMS

DREAMS

When you dream it is now incontestable
You of something partook indigestible—
 So beware how you fare
 Lest in bed you've *nightmare*
And a creature appears that's detestable.

I was staying one Yuletide with Percy-O
I'd exceeded my ration of Turkey-O
 And I dreamt in the night
 I had taken to flight—
But I woke when I fell from my perch-y-O.

I was stroking some creature judiciously,
It received my attentions propitiously,
 But I suddenly stopped,
 'Neath the bedclothes I popped,
For a Fox's teeth grabbed at me viciously.

I was patting and pawing an elephant,
What I gave it 'twas eating most elegant ;
 But I suddenly stopped,
 'Neath the bedclothes I popped,
For its trunk touched my lips quite irrelevant.

DREAMS

On a road that was sheltered umbrageously
I was riding a cycle courageously ;
 But I suddenly stopped,
 'Neath the bed clothes I popped,
When some cur bit my leg most outrageously.

I knew that the Gnu was a ruminant
That his horns for his skull formed a muniment ;
 But the dream broke my snooze,
 From the Zoo he broke loose,
And his eyes were irascibly luminant.

For the Gnu my dislike is inordinate,
His mode of embrace is unfortunate ;
 But I *did* like that Turkey-O
 Which I ate when with Percy-O,
And I'd like a bit more to incorporate.

Now my *dear* little children this festival
Don't imprudently eat each comestible,
 Lest in bed you've *nightmare*
 And you wake with a stare
At the glare of some fiend uncelestial.

Now - my - eye-lids - give - o-ver - their - peep-i-ness
I - shall - slum-ber - un-con-sci-ous - of - creep-i-ness,
 Al-ready - I'm - do-zing
 And - the - book - I - am - clo-sing,
I - have - on-ly - a - feel-ing - of - sleep-i-ness.

“ *BUSINESS AS USUAL* ”

“ BUSINESS AS USUAL ”

(GOD SAVE THE MARK)

The State is not a machine
That should run the Merchant Marine ;
 The idea is quixotic,
 The procedure despotic,
Eccentric, inept the routine.

But the public made clamant appeals
To annex all the profits on keels,
 So they laid an embargo
 On ship and on cargo,
And the brokers they laid by the heels.

Where the flood of a lake used to flow
They floated a hybrid bureau,
 On themselves took the onus
 Of trading as owners,
And voted the broker “ de trop.”

Here's a tale of the Tweendecker “ Sue,”
As a tale true or false it may do ;
 The bureau 't would appear
 Gave her leave to load here
In the Thames for the port of—Na-poo.

“ *BUSINESS AS USUAL* ”

But in every State machine
There's a rival claim between
 One head and another
 That causes the bother,
And crabs departmental routine.

So now, a nestorial authority
Whose department is busy with DORA-ty
 As soon as it heard
 Of the trip it demurred
And resolved to exact its priority.

No licence she held avails,
Unshipped are the case goods and bales ;
 The nestorial control
 Bade the ship to load coal
By proceeding in ballast to WALES.

In vain the owner protests
That the boat is constructed for chests,
 That she can't stow a whole
 Bulk cargo of coal,
She has 'tweens and a tier that congests.

“ *BUSINESS AS USUAL* ”

To the nestors, all is nought ;
On national grounds they sought
 One word to mete—
 They need coal for the Fleet,
So the ship round to Wales must be brought.

It was well the department had faith
That the submarine risk was a wraith,
 For in spite of assails
 The craft got to Wales
And alongside the Port of the Staithe.

Then the trimmer there protests
That the boat is constructed for chests,
 That he can't stow a whole
 Bulk cargo of coal,
She has 'tweens and a tier that congests.

To the nestors all is nought,
On national grounds they sought
 One word to repeat—
 They need coal for the Fleet
And the shipment must somehow be wrought.

“ *BUSINESS AS USUAL* ”

Unlike an unbusinesslike jackal,
Unaddicted are trimmers to cackle ;
 In a word, they refuse
 The vessel to use
Because of her build and her tackle.

Embarked on a cruise she condemns,
Faced with bills for expenses and stems,
 Away she sails
 From that harbour in Wales
Back to London, to load in the THAMES.

What with Attila's crews on her track
It's a marvel she ever came back ;
 But the time that she lost
 Round the coast, and the cost,
Make her maritime mission look black.

The State cannot rig a routine
That will carry the Merchant Marine.
 On our traders and owners
 Should devolve that onus
And the Brokers should FIX the machine.

WILLIAM (Kaiser) to His Henchmen in Russia

WILLIAM (KAISER)
TO HIS HENCHMEN IN RUSSIA

August 1918

Go to, go to, Sir Lenin !
Fear not the Russian mob ;
Stay where you are, Sir Trotsky,
Till finished be my job.
You say that Moscow's rising,
I say to you, Tut-Tut !
I've rifled every arsenal
Of every rifle butt.

The land, the land, Sir Lenin,
That best of all your sops :
Give them the land, Sir Lenin—
When I have drawn the crops.
Give them the factories also,
So I've the shot and shell ;
Then, when the war is finished—
Then let them go to hell.

OCTOBER 1918

October 1918

The Teutonic Pacific Offensive
Is a piece of their counter-defensive ;
 But they've shown such despite
 In the wake of their flight
They will find to their cost it's expensive.

In Berlin, in Vienna and Prague
They design to sign Peace at The Hague ;
 But it's bosh, save the Bosch
 Shall surrender to Foch
And hand his Toledo to Haig.

November 1918

Bosch and Bill went up the hill
 To breathe out fire and slaughter ;
Bill came down and lost his Crown
 And Bosch besought for quarter.

THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

1914—1918

While the British Soldier is bleeding
And striking for freedom to-day
There are others in Britain who're "striking"
And "bleeding" the public for "pay."
They acknowledge no debt to their Country,
They prefer to do what they like ;
They kick against law and order,
At the slightest excuse they "strike."

Says the Conscientious Objector :—
" The evil of war I dislike,
You may call me a Passive Resister,
You may goad me to hunger-strike.
I'm opposed to the Law of Conscription,
My scruples forbid me to slay,
But I've no objection to striking
When the object is more pay."

THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

“ Should enemies land in England,
Should they ever ill-treat my wife,
Though I *might* with my voice remonstrate,
I should bar all inducement to strife.
I would never use lethal weapons,
My conscience forbids me to slay,
For I only tolerate striking
When striking means more pay.”

“ I belong to a Friendly Society,
On us all it's incumbent alike :
Were one to refuse to join
Our Union would order a “ strike.”
’Twould be nothing to us should the stoppage
Imperil th’ Imperial cause,
For to us the State is as nothing
Compared with our Union's laws.”

“ I will never enlist in the Army
For the War I will never do work ;
If you place me in Labour Battalions
I will hunger-strike or shirk.
I confess, came it ever to fighting,
The foreigner never need fear ;
But in internecine warfare
I would fight my countrymen here.”

THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

“ We’re at one with the Soviets in Russia,
With Syndicalists we ply,
We’re an International Brotherhood
And that is the reason why
I will never fight the foreigner,
I am wedded to one idea—
It’s to fight the so-called patriots
Of my fellow-countrymen here.”

“ There is nothing more autocratic
Than the democratic rule ;
I’m a Socialist, Anarchist, Bolshevik
Of the ochlocratic school.
No prison would ever confine me—
Why, the walls would be razed to the ground ;
The masses would stop the Universe,
They would stop it from turning round.”

“ If you threatened with pains and penalties
We would down with your Monarch and Crown,
We would down with everything, everything,
Turn the hemisphere upside down.
We would stop all traffic and industry,
All miners and spinners would hop ;
We would stop at nothing, nothing,
Why the World from turning we’d stop.”

MIXED PICKLES

MIXED PICKLES

I've an Olla Podrida of gossip
I would like at your feet to submit
As a grateful fauvette might surrender
A crumb or a grub to a tit.

I've a rollicking, runaway chestnut
It is not of the Pegasus breed,
It is one of a stud I have studied,
It is merely a hobby—my steed.

He is chafing a bit at the bridle,
He would like me to loosen the rein ;
When I pause at the rhymes and the metres
He paws with his foot in disdain.

Dear creature ! He's pleased with his outing,
He pricks up his ears at the styles ;
But his features are carved statuesquely,
They never relax into smiles.

MIXED PICKLES

There is something unique about animals
They like you and lick when you stroke ;
But why don't they burst into laughter,
Or, at all events, wink at your joke.

I shall ride on a roving commission,
There are topics enough on the whole ;
Here's a truce to the Armageddon
And a truce to the Shipping Control.

There is something amiss with all poetry
It has ceased many men to amuse,
They'll read novels and novels and novels,
But devil a tome of a muse.

What the deuce do they want for their ducats,
What the Dickens I ask is their wheeze ;
Great Scott ! Is there never a Longfellow,
A Burns or a Byron to please ?

What is wrong with the race of the poets,
With the troubadours—Celtic and Erse
That men have forsaken the pabulum
Of an artistry fashioned in verse.

MIXED PICKLES

If Wordsworth be rather voluminous
And Milton austere and remote,
There is always a Rudyard Kipling
To chirp his particular note.

Perchance they've become too didactical,
Too fantastical, morbid, unreal ;
For men have become too prosaic
To heed an idyllic ideal.

For the privilege now of existence
We a licence perforce must produce
The only unlicensed privilege
Is reserved for poetical use.

* * * * *

Now the man of affairs I most pity
Is the one with a single idea
As I pity the man whose whole soul is
Engulfed in a tankard of beer.

Guid luck ta the canny Scotsman
Wi' his head wi' fashes sae fu',
For he licketh his chaps o'er a couplet
As its cud doth a coo also chew.

* * * * *

MIXED PICKLES

There is something amiss with the Misses
Now they've gotten political votes,
For they seem less concerned about matches
Than turning the light on the goats.

If I might interpose an amendment
I should urge the connubial knot
And a swain unto every distaff
I would an I could allot.

* * * * *

There is something amiss with the pulpit,
There is something amiss with the pew,
For the shepherd would lead to the wilderness
And the sheep have their own point of view.

But harmony comes out of discords
Pure airs o'er the desert soft-blow ;
The shepherd finds herbage for grazers
And the wrath of the flock melts like snow.

I should like to see the churches
To overflowing filled ;
All the clergymen Boanerges,
All the congregations thrilled.

MIXED PICKLES

There is surely in store a revival
That shall kindle afresh this era,
Shall enhearten decadent convictions
And discover Divinity nearer.

* * * * *

It is better to answer discreetly,
It is better one's rancour to smother ;
For a rally will follow a sally,
One retort will elicit another.

We'll assume you've the best of the argument,
Your artill'ry's the first in the land ;
But beware should your bullet ricochet
And beware should his dum-dum expand.

* * * * *

Chant cheerily, chirruping cherub,
Pennigerous sky—pirouette !
Sing a lesson on manners to mortals,
Gimp chorister, migniard fauvette !

* * * * *

With the Germans there's something mysterious,
If you ask for a goose they refuse ;
But expose some cigars and some hosiery
And they'll hint that—perhaps they've a goose.

MIXED PICKLES

The Watch on the Rhine we are winding,
Hands point to Cologne and to Bonn ;
The wheels are a-ticking off old scores
And the Eau de Cologne flows along.

If the Junkers had been victorious
They'd have given the Burghers the boot,
They'd have elbowed them out of the pathway
And made pillar-posts give a salute.

* * * * *

There will some day be a millennium,
But to-day it is only a dream ;
There'll be ever some octopus picaroon
To drag down the Peace quinquere-me.

Till late, 'twas a Teuton irruption
(As Alaric sacked Rome with his Goths),
But to-morrow may bring forth a dragon,
Or a swarm of some militant moths.

Would you bask in Eirenicon's sunshine,
Beware of ironical clouds,
Before you make terms with your shibboleths
Make terms with the man in the shrouds.

* * * * *

MIXED PICKLES

When a foreigner lands in this country
And peruses the papers withal
He *might* think we've gone to the devil,
Or he *might* think we ride for a fall.

They so sling their black ink at the perils
Which the troops here in London beset,
He's appalled at this laund'ring in public,
At the dirt on our linen upset.

But I think that the longer he sojourns
With a sense of proportion unquashed
He'll admit that the linen in London
Is as clean as is any yet washed.

Of course there are purists pragmatic
With their heads in the clouds who hold forth
And imagine the whole of the garment
Is defiled by a speck on the cloth.

There is nothing amiss with the Capital,
You may evermore trust her alone ;
They her bounds used to beat in the City,
Now she's beaten all bounds in a loan.

* * * * *

MIXED PICKLES

The Bolshevik record is shady,
His pacific professions are rot ;
He fraternised free with his enemies,
But his people he caused to be shot.

An adept in a wholesale extortion
He threatens with dungeons and bombs
And stifles the cries of his victims
With systematic Pogroms.

* * * * *

There's a nervous complaint—connictation—
And I beg those afflicted to think,
And before they expound osculation
To arrest their involunt'ry wink.

Araminda asked Strephon at dinner
To pass her the pepper—Cayenne :
Now Streph is addicted to winking
And he winked, yes he winked at her then.

Of course Araminda, not knowing
That he only unwittingly winked
When Strephon asked *her* for Mixed Pickles,
She, like a sweet innocent, pinked.

* * * * *

MIXED PICKLES

My rollicking, runaway chestnut,
Here's an end to your saucy pannade,
Here's a truce to the day's excursion,
Here's a truce to your bold escapade.

* * * * *

Chant cheerily, chirruping cherub,
Pennigerous sky-pirouette !
I would we possessed your libretto,
Gimp chorister, migniard fauvette !

* * * * *

I salute you noetic co-entities,
I this scrap at your feet would submit
As a grateful fauvette might surrender
A crumb or a grub to a tit.

* * * * *

To Canadians and Anzacs, greeting !
Hurrah for our Tommy and Jack ;
Good luck to the doughty Dough-Boys,
We are waiting to welcome them back.

December, 1918

AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARY

AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARY

I once had a very good friend,
One on whom I could ever depend :
 Together at school
 We derided the fool
Who averred our alliance would end.

I remember we climbed up a tree,
Ate apples and apples in glee :
 But the acid or salt
 In the fruit called a halt,
And I'll swear he made faces at me.

It's notorious that youth is a glutton,
And he battens and fattens on mutton :
 But the tup it was tough,
 My companion grew rough,
And when huffy he cares not a button.

My mamma was a mother to him,
She powdered and scrubbed him—the limb :
 But as might be expected,
 He in time went neglected
And became less irradiantly trim.

AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARY

I shall never forget my joy
At seeing my chum with a toy.
 If he could, he would
 Nip the beautiful wood
Till the colour began to annoy.

As a wheel will incline to the rut,
As a beast at a dog likes to butt,
 So into his niche
 He would anything pitch
Till my friend felt a pain—when he cut !

Now his vision was one of a kind
That in tubers and rose-trees you'll find.
 For only in name
 An eye he could claim :
This functionary was blind.

As a squirrel goes nap on a nut,
So a cob in his clutch went phut !
 With the crackers he'd play
 Till his vice gave way,
And his ivory went—tut ! tut !

AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARY

As the mavis is fond of its meat,
Enamoured he was of a sweet :
 Till he got in disgrace
 And grew black in the face,
Then his taste for a sweet grew effete.

As a slit in the slide of a 'chute
May lacerate the skin of the nude ;
 As a crack in a pipe
 Gets the size of a slype,
So a thorn in the flesh takes root.

They stopped it and topped it with gold,
Soporifics injected untold.
 But still it increased,
 Became more diseased,
And ever the more it holed.

I am sorry to say that with years
He caused me much pain and more tears ;
 His grip once so fast,
 Grew unsteady at last
And harried my nerviest fears.

AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARY

I roared on my pillow all night,
I bemoaned my unmerited plight,
 Till my friend reconciled,
 Calmed me down like a child,
And again we were comrades and bright.

Oho ! for the friend of our youth,
He's a jolly good fellow to soothe :
 So I thought as I spent
 Many years in content
With no premonition of ruth.

Now I'm going to wag of my woe,
For my friend got decidedly low ;
 His crown was crest-fallen,
 His graveolence galling,
And his prong like the beak of a crow.

I argued and argued about him,
Could I ever, I asked, do without him ?
 It was certainly sad,
 His appearance was bad,
More and more I began now to doubt him.

AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARY

With the advent of winter he whacked me,
No more in digestion he backed me :
 So I judged it impartial
 To hold a court-martial
And determine the torment that racked me.

A report of its tedious proceedings
You will find in its pigeon-holed pleadings :
 Suffice it to say
 I spent most of the day
In declining my usual feedings.

With a final spasmodical shout
My demoniac friend petered out ;
 He was placed on a stool
 With a cushion of wool,
And of course I collapsed with the bout.

I soliloquised over, in truth,
That very good friend of my youth ;
 His stump so decayed
 And his fangs I surveyed,
And that was the end of—My Tooth.

THE VILLAGE-POND

THE VILLAGE-POND

The village-pond 's a playing ground
Where slumdom learns it's lessons,
Where others eke might sometimes go
And gain a few impressions.

A wreck, a ruin lay around
For there had been a scrimmage,
Each little ship those kids had sailed
Was now a broken image.

An awkward squad of urchins young
The terms of peace debated ;
The point was how all future frays
Might be eliminated.

They who sought peace at any price
Kept on this dictum psalming :
Prepare for peace and there'll be peace—
So they plumped for disarming.

THE VILLAGE-POND

The level-headed dared to doubt
But those prevailed who shouted :—
Prepare for war and there'll be war,
Let's banish it, let's dout it !

Dear little kiddies they went home
Pleased with their latest moral ;
For never, never, never more
Would there be any quarrel.

The village-pond 's a playing ground,
Where slumdom learns its lessons ;
Where others eke might sometimes go
And gain a few impressions.

Dear little urchins they came back
In course of time with *new* boats,
And some had Cutters, some had Yawls,
Some under-water U-boats.

Their handicraft they sailed with craft
Over the water's margin ;
They nearly split their little sides
Laughing at each one's bargain.

THE VILLAGE-POND

But while their craft the surface plied
The submarines plied under,
And soon the sailing fleet were by
The U-boats bumped asunder.

The fleet heels of the greyhound keels
Were barged into by phantoms
That rose up from down-under depths
Debelling them like bantams.

A fierce *melée* ensued ashore,
The peace-crew crew with choler ;
The war-boys give peaceboys the stick
And then the spoil they collar.

When they had gone, a man of war
In these peace-boys did rub it :
“ Young doctrinaires, you should prepares
Agin them coves wot covet.”

2

The village-pond 's a playing ground
Where slumdom learns its lessons,
Where others eke might sometimes go
And gain a few impressions.

THE VILLAGE-POND

There was a war beside the pond
 Atween the sheep and cattle ;
While minstrel-boys on haut-boys played
 And boy-scouts piped to battle.

The war-boys and the peace-boys came,
 The shepherd-boys and cow-boys ;
The shop-boys and the school-boys came,
 The stableboys and ploughboys.

The oxen they commenced the brawl,
 Their horns for gore protruded ;
But when they charged, the nimble sheep
 A tossing they eluded.

The bovine herd hallooed for paint
 To paint the black sheep blacker ;
The ovine flock bah-bahed for flags—
 Red flags with which to swagger.

The mudlark merchants quick supplied
 The paint and flags together,
They minted money by their deals
 With bullock and bell-wether.

THE VILLAGE-POND

The oxen then commenced afresh
Their horns for gore protruded ;
But when they charged, the nimble sheep
A tossing they eluded.

When all felt famished and fatigued
They sued to rest and victual :
Most boys sold all their stock of tuck,
While some sold nought or little.

As quarrels from their cross-bows fleet,
Both sides resume their quarrels ;
Barons of beef and South-downs meet,
Sir Loins look to their laurels.

Fighting and feeding alternate
With ne'er a gain bucolic ;
Aim and evasion alternate
With aye an ovine frolic.

At length they signed an Armistice,
The novel war was over ;
Some of the boys were as they were,
While others were in clover.

THE VILLAGE-POND

Those who were lacking cast sheep's eyes
At those who had been banking,
They e'en yclept them profiteers,
Or vowed that they were swanking.

The wastrel kine and fleecy kind
With eyes that bulged from sockets,
Gave chase to boys who bore the brass
And picked it from their pockets.

The wealth diffused among the poor,
It made the urchins mutter
To watch Beef-steaks and Mutton-chops
Pour it adown the gutter.

3

All on a Sunday afternoon
When gossips are a-grouping,
A squadron of the light brigade
Of little maids came trooping.

All arm-in-arm as is their wont
The throng of dots paraded,
With eyes of mischief fixed upon
The pond they enfiladed.

THE VILLAGE-POND

They joined the brotherhood of boys,
And watched the wavy waters ;
It was a scene of keen delight,
It was their main headquarters.

Now children have some quaint ideas,
They have the simial failing ;
While father's slang they oft repeat,
His wisdom 's unavailing.

As children simply wont keep still,
In that they ape not mother,
They now in mimicry resolved
To marry one another.

Pretending in their childish ways
Each boy and girl were mated
Like Pa and Ma each twain embraced
And told the tale belated.

The minstrel-boys played madrigals,
The boy-scouts piped a ditty ;
While you may bet each chatterbox
Came out with something witty.

THE VILLAGE-POND

They marched in couples down the strand,
Made ducks and drakes on water ;
Thus spent a merry afternoon
Each mother's son and daughter.

Of course they promised long to love,
For ever and for ever ;
The matches lasted full an hour—
By dint of great endeavour.

About that time the boys opined
They were not built for lovers :
They pined to roam in single state
And go and catch the plovers.

They vowed that they could not afford
To keep their wives in comfort :
They wanted all their unspent shot
To spend in Rome or Romford.

They could not purchase chocolates
For wives, nor rings nor locketts,
They needed all their " splosh " for sports
And penknives in their pockets.

THE GREAT RAILWAY STRIKE

So when they reached their humble homes
The little couples parted ;
Their matrimony was out-played,
The taste for it had tarted.

The bugle sounds a call to arms,
And everybody tickles,
But nought could set a match alight
Because the boys were pickles.

A MORAL

These juveniles in later life
May play a part less sportive ;
But similar results might then
Render life's ends abortive.

THE GREAT RAILWAY STRIKE

27 Sept.—6 Oct., 1919

From the strike of the railmen, one feature emerges—
At the heart of the nation a blow they will aim ;
Be the railways controlled by the State or by companies,
They will punish the public and strike all the same.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMISTICE

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMISTICE

11 a.m. ; 11th November, 1919

Normal the course of pursuits on the morn of the Great
Remembrance,

Normal the volume of traffic was—normal in borough and
village—

Over the length and the breadth of Albion, Scotia and
Cambria,

Over the southernmost continent, over the western
Dominion.

When, howsoever, one heard the maroon or the church-
bell sounding,

All into silence relapsed, whether knights of empire or
labour :

Everyone paused for two minutes when clocks struck the
hour of eleven.

Picture Niagara, hurling its limitless cataract prone-wards,
Suddenly closing its waterfloods, pausing and standing on
tip-toe,

Ceasing to plunge down its gorge and withholding in
silence its breathing,

Lacking the power to carry-on, lacking a drop to trickle !

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMISTICE

Picture the mastodon ocean, thundering against all
impediments,
Suddenly being arrested, upheld by a hand uplifted,
Paralysed, petrified, frozen or filled with emotion and
anguish !

Picture the pause of the Moslem at hearing the sound of
Muezzin,
Picture him staying his actions and turning to prayer and
to Mecca !

Picture the man and the woman, stopping in midst of their
tillage,
Saying devoutly in prayer " The Angel Salutation,"
When, in the village resounds with a mediæval matureness
Morning, noonday and sunset the silvery chimes of the
Angelus !

So, in a moment surceased the traffic, the gossip, the
laughter,
Stopped for the space of two minutes when clocks struck
the hour of eleven.
There, wheresoever they were, King and people fore-
gathered together,
Paying, with exquisite pathos, their homage to those who
had perished.

THE COOLER

Perished while manning the trenches or forming a wall
with their stout hearts,
Falling like bricks from a wall on the stricken field of
battle,
Winning for us, under God, our safety and freedom from
slavery.

Gathered the clusters together—saluting the Heroes
Departed—
Silent as statues of marble round Cenotaph, Roll of
Honour ;
Then, with a sense of indebtedness, everyone turned to
his duties,
Turned to their normal occasions the much-moved
empire and people.
While, in the course of eight minutes thereafter, one
cabled from Melbourne
Tidings of how Australasia had ordered those infinite
seconds.

THE COOLER

A stranger drew nigh to a pond,
The haunts of youth reviewing,
The mem'ries of a life-time he
Was mentally tattooing.

THE COOLER

In days of eld he might have been
A pilgrim home from Ramah,
Or wandered he from shrine to shrine,
He might have been a palmer.

In sooth he was a common wight
Come here for cogitation,
To ruminate among the scenes
Where happened his creation.

Throughout his teens and early prime
Ills had enough employed him ;
Wherefore the teens of riper years
Not overmuch annoyed him.

On him pressed fardels light, light as
Might press a bale of toison ;
Health was the measure of his wealth,
An asset of his foyson.

When farmers brewed their home-brewed beer
He launched the brewster's cooler,
With playmates filled it full, and then
It could not be filled fuller.

THE COOLER

Over the pond they punted it,
And sank it in the middle ;
They muddled through, as we do wars—
But how is aye the riddle.

He liked the game of ship ahoy,
He liked the gliding motion :
Belike it brewed a longing for
A hoy upon the ocean.

Eftsoons he hired a cockle-shell
And sculled upon a river ;
The tub zig-zagged from bank to bank,
No headway he could give her.

Anon he mastered oarsmanship
And mustered up a notion
That he would like a brigantine
To bowl him o'er the ocean.

The fates forbade him sailing to
The Sev'n Seas or Soroka,
Instead they bade him scout for freights
And be an honest broker.

THE COOLER

He chartered ships from Timbuctoo,
He fixed them for Coruña ;
He chartered ships to Jericho
And to Tristan d'Acunha.

He chartered ships to both the Poles,
To Ind and Honolulu ;
He fixed with Norsemen, Goths and Franks,
And maybe with a Zulu.

No galley slave slaved more than he
To earn a lean commission,
But when the broker seeks his fee
He's threatened with perdition.

The broker every subject knows
From freeboard unto gunwale ;
He knows that owners always lose,
That smoke goes up the funnel.

He knows the ports of all the world,
Their merchandise, their quarries :
He knows that vessels lie afloat
And e'en aground tell stories.

THE COOLER

Say he is asked to find a ship
That can sail to Killarney ;
Of course he finds one, but he's told
The order is all blarney.

Or comes a client from afar
To give him a revival,
The client quite forgets his name
And charters with a rival.

But live he long enough he'll find
Things are not so unequal ;
They will pan out, ere he conck out,
More equal in the sequel.

The pond it hath a cheersome view
With banks beside its edges :
One-half is bound by turnpike road,
One-half by trees and hedges.

The common wight lay on the grass
As on a bed herbaceous,
His mind veered back to boyhood days
When he was less capacious.

THE COOLER

To call to mind each incident
He gingers up his memory
As men embellish rusty steel
By using cloth of emery.

And one stood out upon the screen
As live as any drama,
It passed before him like a dream
Or like a panorama.

A farmer with his wife and sons,
As well as with his daughter,
He saw them drive into the pond
To give the horse some water.

But ye may ken there is a hole
And, zounds ! the farmer found it ;
The horse it plunged, the wife she swooned,
The kiddies were astounded.

Unevenly the wheels did sink,
The vehicle was tilted ;
Whereby the daughter lost her hold
And from her seat was jilted.

THE COOLER

The sons o'er-balanced as they tried
To save her from disaster :
The trio in the water fell,
And nothing could be nastier.

The mother from her swoon revives
And frantically waving,
With agile steps jumps off the chaise
In the one hope of saving ;

But in the feat she caught her foot
Within the reins loose-lying,
Head over heels she tumbled in—
And that was very trying.

Of course the farmer took good heed
More wisdom to exhibit :
He to the dashboard lashed the reins
And then prepared to slip it.

Just then the animal decides
To lie down in the water,
So o'er the dashboard pitched papa
And joined his sons and daughter.

THE COOLER

The mudlark ever haunts the pond,
His is the tribe prevailing ;
And Certes ! there were mudlarks there
Who watched the family failing.

They held a council on the spot
To succour or to censure ;
Unanimously they agreed
To help in this adventure.

They launched the brewster's cooler then
And thrust it through the water,
To rescue all and take aboard
Pa, ma, and sons and daughter.

Their rickety raft with passengers
T'wards land they then did tool her ;
Were they not drenched when the debarked
Out of that cranky cooler !

Then with the pole they probed beneath
And stirred the mirky bottom ;
The wheels they eased, the horse they raised,
Out of the hole they got 'em.

THE COOLER

Out of the pond splashes the horse,
Muddled, muddied but cooler ;
Out of the pond the dog-cart jogs
T'wards Pa and his Home-Ruler.

So when the State was in a hole,
Out of it what did tool her ?
The Ocean Tramp, the Merchant Fleet,
They made good, like that Cooler.

The farmer beckoned to the boys
And fumbled for a penny,
But as he wanted all he had
He did not give them any.

The mudlarks were of tender years,
One nine, one eight, one seven ;
They merely looked up higher and heard
A skylark hymn to heaven.

I've known a nation in distress,
Seen her in sennights fateful ;
Yea, though an empire bled for her,
She was not less ungrateful.

THE COOLER

The common wight lay on the grass
As on a bed herbaceous,
He wakened from his reverie
And mused of men ungracious.

And summing up some other wights
He found them knaves consummate,
Few only are the pukkha wights
Worthy to gain the summit.

But when he thought of all the men
Who do the world inhabit :
The red and yellow, black and white,
'Tis not one sort can have it.

And some bestow and some receive,
Some thankful are, some grateful,
But all have functions to perform,
To ostracise is fatal.

THERE rise the monumental hills—
The great men of the planet ;
Down in the valleys there are those
Who equally must man it.

THE COMMON EEL

The common wight rose from the turf
As from a bed herbaceous,
Forsook the cradle of his birth
And felt less contumacious.

No more the cooler held in thrall,
No more the misadventure ;
A larger vessel him awaits,
And he must needs content her.

He needs must quit the rippling pond—
Pursuits, delights pedantic—
To live and let live, give and take,
'Mongst small men and gigantic.

THE COMMON EEL

In those most nether vaults beneath the foam
Where Protozoa feed and find their home,
Where sponges spirally ascend and sweep
The fertile floor of the Thalassian deep ;

Down in the grottoes of those plumbless vales,
Unsought of mammals and unknown to whales ;
Beneath the eddies where no mammoth steals—
There in their orgies lurk a pair of eels.

THE COMMON EEL

Spending their honeymoon in tideless coves
In imperturbable subaqueous groves ;
All in their wedding garments there they crouch,
There they repose upon their bridal couch.

There in that nursery their young are born,
And in the course of time up-springs their spawn ;
Up, up it like transparent glass doth rise,
Up springs the progeny of that emprise.

To surf and surface these descendants swarm,
And in the warmth they into elvers form ;
Thence do these gentle eel-fares harkaway
To inlets and to rivers for their prey.

There wax they plump as infants in short frocks,
And scurry in and out of ooze or rocks ;
All up the floods and up the freshet streams,
Where food is plenteous and where worm-life teems.

In beds alluvial and in Danish dykes,
Down in the bottom, out of reach of pikes
They grow—save such as fall to mesh or lure—
Till in the course of nature they mature.

THE COMMON EEL

Then dons the eel her silvery nuptial gown,
And with her silvered partner she floats down ;
A new life and a new abode they try,
And into deep and deeper waters hie.

Down from the Thames and shallow freshet streams,
Down sluggish waterways (in Eden dreams) ;
Down to the seas and happy hunting grounds,
Down to pelagic depths devoid of sounds.

Beyond the Channel and Hibernia they,
For yon engulfed abysses, make their way ;
On, on they course to where Atlantis sleeps
Sepultured in unfathomable deeps.

There the twain, tied in a connubial knot,
Do re-enact their parents' sapient plot ;
As did their forbears, so they now confide
Their offspring to the surface and the tide.

TWO RED DEER OF KNOLE

TWO RED DEER OF KNOLE

I like to watch the fallow deer
Disporting in the glade ;
The herd that marches past me like
A martial cavalcade.

They tread so light, so swift, so sure,
They scarce disturb a reed ;
An arrow in its airy flight
Might emulate their speed.

The thrush may hearken to the worm
That tunnels underground ;
But man scarce hears the buck and doe
That through the greenwood bound.

I love to see the forest deer
In thicket or in mead ;
They look so shapely, neat and clean,
So docile as they feed.

They seem unique and look unlike
The beast that we call ox ;
Dearer they are than all the tribes
Of cloven hoofs and hocks.

TWO RED DEER OF KNOLE

To slaughter them like vermin, I
Account it as a sin ;
They are the loveliest creatures in
The Forest of the Ching.

But fallow deer in forest slade
Pertain not to this scroll ;
I'm rather wishful to expand
On Two Red Deer of Knole.

There must have been some tender hind,
Meet as Actæon's mate
(There often is a female in
An episode of hate).

This tender hind she must have known
Just how to play her rôle
To win her way into the hearts
Of Two Red Deer of Knole.

For they engaged in mortal strife
All for the sake of her :
One to the other would not yield—
Save to the vanquisher.

TWO RED DEER OF KNOLE

What though the park had hundreds more
As lissom as was she :
She, she alone of all the herd
Fired their cupidity.

“ Now yield thee, yield thee swashbuckler ! ”
Said one hart to the other,
“ Or I will butt thy haughty pate
And toss thee in the gutter.”

“ Look to thyself, thou greedy oof ! ”
With ire replied the other.
“ Or I will twist thy ruffled neck
Withouten further bother.”

Now these two stags vast antlers had,
And many a branching tyne ;
And after butting they became
Locked in a close entwine.

They backed and butted, shocked and shook,
And wrenched and tugged and strained,
But ne'er a wit those horns would part,
They were so fast enchained.

TWO RED DEER OF KNOLE

They poise each other on their horns
Till blood bursts from their ears ;
Blood-vessels break inside their heads,
Blood falls like gory tears.

They wrestle, wrestle doggedly,
Never a one gives in ;
Swaying aside, still interlocked,
Ever each wills to win.

Time is no object. What has time
To do with such a duel ?
Here envy, hatred, malice fight
For the sake of a jewel.

Time ? What is time in such a case ?
What an it last a day ?
A day ? In men's affairs it lasts
A year, an age—for aye.

These were no brockets ; no, nor fawns
With horns of yesteryear
These knew the strength of every tyne,
The tricks of every deer.

TWO RED DEER OF KNOLE

With their enormous antlers each
Would overshadow his rival ;
Then stamp and trample on him till
Life would be past survival.

Ah ! there, at length, more expert, one
Hath flung the other down ;
Dashed it about till dead, and then
He claimed the victor's crown.

But locked in such a deathly grip,
Himself he could not free ;
Wounded, he tossed his foe about
Till he no more could see.

Blood gushed from every aperture
Of his unconscious head ;
Then he, too, fell exhausted—and
The keeper shot him dead.

The tender hind of course repined
And mourned her tragic lovers ;
But she at length became resigned,
And linked her lot with others.

THE COAL STRIKE

THE COAL STRIKE

Peradventure the miners had wit
When the ponies they left in the pit
And refused (in a hump)
The water to pump,
But the mine is now swamped and unfit.

Peradventure the miners will say
They this weapon had cause to display,
But 'tis well to remember
When indulging in temper
There's a pill to be swallowed next day.

April 7, 1921

QUOTH A LEAF

She smiled on me—I wonder why ?
For I am but an Autumn Leaf,
Whose tenure and whose tinsel days
Upon the Tree of Life are brief.

I'm not an Evergreen like Yew,
Nor grow I on the Mountain Ash ;
I'm not the foliage of the Vine,
And Copper Beeches count me trash.

QUOTH A LEAF

I am the least of Autumn Leaves,
Less than a Fig-Leaf ; less, am I—
And yet the lady deigned to smile,
She smiled on me—I wonder why ?

Would that her heart were plain to read
As is the hour upon a dial ;
Then could I tell if somewhat more
Than winsomeness were in her smile.

I was not born of Silver Birch,
Nor do I own the Royal Oak ;
Upon the Laurel I've no claim,
The Palm belongs to other folk.

Were I a Rose-Leaf, I would bribe
The blossom to unseal its phial,
To charm her with its sweet bouquet
And learn from her why she did smile.

I dwell not with the upland Pines
And upstart Poplars scorn my ways ;
I sup with Elms and Sycamores
And prostrate fall before green Bays.

I'm not a choice Tobacco Leaf,
I'm not a Tea-Leaf—though I'm dry ;
Albeit I'm but an Autumn Leaf,
She smiled on me—I wonder why ?

SONNET XXXV

SONNET XXXV

Dark, darker still the London streets become
To thwart the midnight raid of Zeppelin ;
Dimmed are the lights of traffic, shop and inn,
And people wend their footsteps venturesome
Through urban thoroughfares and villadom.
Are they intimidated by Berlin ?
Is there a tremor of mistrust within ?
Are they down-hearted with the long-drawn scrum ?
There is indeed a chastened mood abroad,
A sense of gloom that none can quite subdue ;
But from its depths, spiraling heavenward,
A gleam triumphant, luminous to view,
Diminishes the darkness which once awed,
And lightens up the heart with trust anew.

December 18, 1915.

SONNET XXXVI

Too much self-introspection is not good,
Against it better instincts should rebel ;
A buoyant spirit fails on faults to dwell
Lest it become prone overmuch to brood
And so engender a depressing mood.
A little self-analysis is well
To curb the confidence of sentinel,

SONNET XXXVI

To stay the pride of man or womanhood.
But rather (like him whom we hear of who
 " Pursues the even tenor of his ways ")
We should pursue the good that we can do,
 Abased, but conscious of deserving praise ;
Sure that there's none quite perfect, none quite true,
 Hopeful that good may overhaul the base.

SONNET XXXVII

Armistice 1918

ELEVENTH HOUR—ELEVENTH DAY—ELEVENTH MONTH

Come gentle Peace ! Thy faltering footsteps mend,
 Come in the image of fond motherhood
 Who stays the bleatings of her wayward brood
And weans them from the discords that offend.
Thy soft deft fingers o'er the lute extend
 And cast a trance o'er man's contentious mood,
 Lure him to realms where harmony is wooed,
Where Peace may reign and strife no more may rend.
Come gentle Peace ! With healing unguents come
 And salve the wounds of war that greet the sight ;
Welcome the warrior home with fife and drum,
 Hush the harsh sound of might contesting right,
And, this refrain with notes mellifluous hum :—
 God and the right predominate the fight.

11 Nov., 1918

SONNET XXXVIII

SONNET XXXVIII

When foes advanced, no peace-note we addressed,
We tholed the thongs of spiteful Zeppelins,
We dreaded the dread of their Apache stings ;
They taught us to endure a sterner test.
Though sniper gangs in viper craft distressed
Our armless argosies with lawless slings :
Stoic we fought as one who surely wins
And vowed to rid the world of such a pest.
Like greedy locusts that all vert partake,
For four years gorged they on the fruits of spoil ;
Doggèd and dour, no word of peace we spake,
Just was our cause, we therefore dared to foil :
While they, no sooner failure made them quake
Than peace they sought to save their country's soil.

SONNET XXXIX

Walk circumspectly all thy live-long days,
Premise that every act may be laid bare ;
For, there are lynx eyes in the busy air
Who're nothing loth to scrutinize thy ways
And readier are to sully than to praise.

SONNET XXXIX

Be compromising circumstances there,
Thou unforeseen developments may'st share,
And then thou may'st be netted in a maze ;
Walk circumspectly and to none concede
Cause for resentment or suspicions false.
Walk round each stance, weigh well each word and deed
And watch the drift of that which thee enthralls :
'Tis better to be sure by taking heed
Than to be sorry for thy slips and falls.

PA
6011
2164 V511

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

**THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW.**

Series 9482



3 1205 02112 7624

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A A 001 427 663

